



NICK CARTER WEEKLY

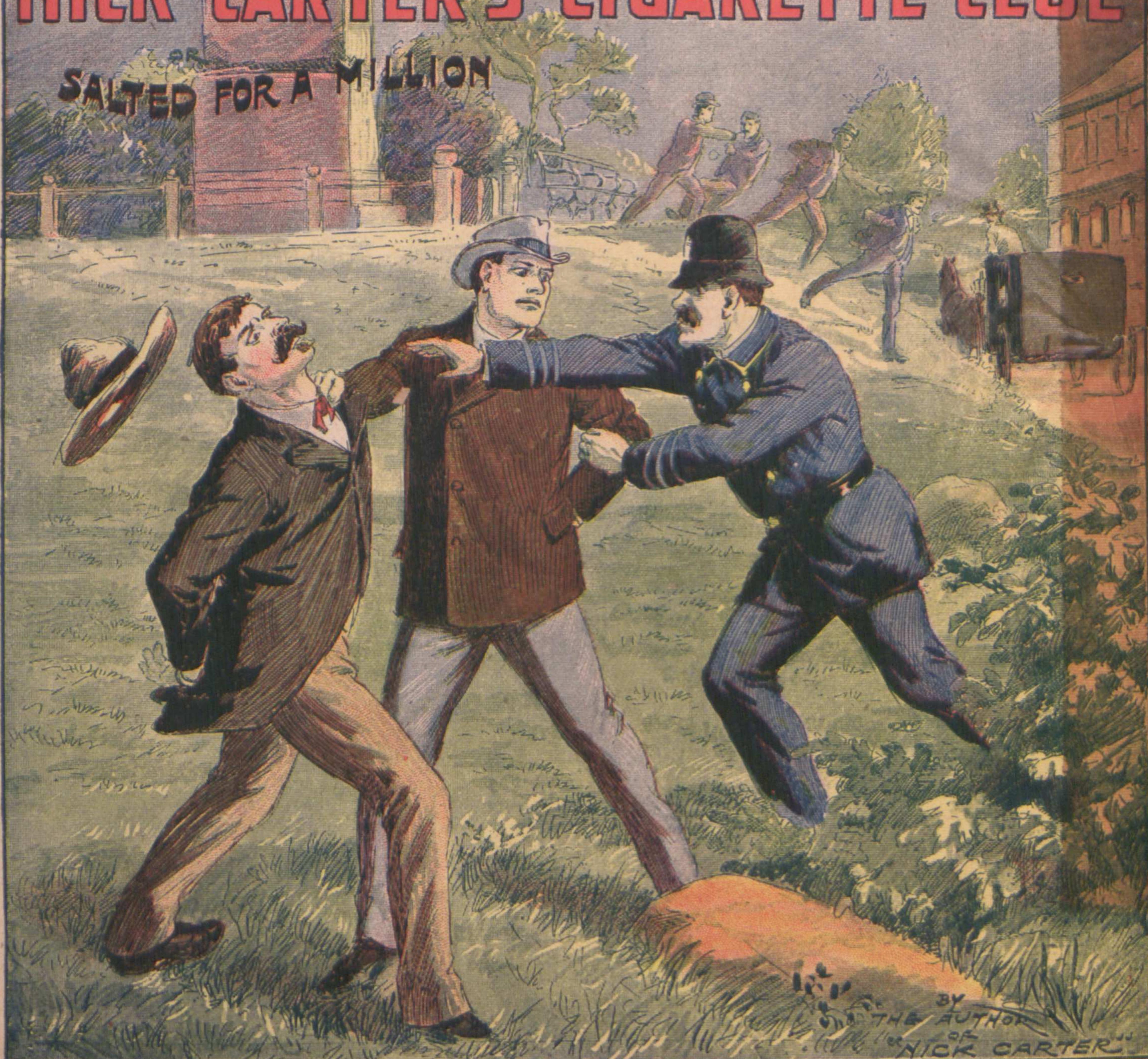
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No. 316.

Price, Five Cents.

NICK CARTER'S CIGARETTE CLUE

SALTED FOR A MILLION



BY
THE AUTHOR
OF
"NICK CARTER"

"I'LL HAVE NONE OF THAT!" CRIED THE OFFICER TO NICK, AS TERHUNE, FIGHTING LIKE A DEMON, WRENCHED AWAY.



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NEW YORK, January 17, 1903.

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NICK CARTER'S CIGARETTE CLUE;

OR,

“Salted” for a Million.

By the author of “NICHOLAS CARTER.”

CHAPTER I.

MAN OVERBOARD.

In a twinkling the tall man had gripped his companion by the throat.

Then he bent him backward over the steamer rail.

It was midnight and after, but there was a full moon, the sky was cloudless, and the surroundings were almost as plain as by day.

The big Sound steamer throbbed and churned along on its eastern course with all its passengers in their staterooms.

That is, all but two.

These two were on the shaded side of the boat, well aft.

They had been seated on a bench in the narrow passage between the side of the boat and the cabins.

But, as they talked, they became excited, and both arose.

In a flash of anger the tall man suddenly executed his hostile move against the other.

For a moment the two glared into each other's eyes.

“Be a little more temperate in your speech, Lansing,” said the tall man, coldly, “or something will happen.”

“You'd kill me, Terhune!” gasped Lansing as the tall man withdrew his hands.

“Something will happen, I said,” returned Terhune, sharply.

“Why don't you kill me?” taunted Lansing. “Then you could have everything your own way.”

“Will you be reasonable?”

“I am reasonable. You come from the West, Terhune, and these knock-down-and-drag-out Western methods of yours won't go in the East.”

Terhune muttered something under his breath.

"I am armed," continued Lansing, threateningly, "and if you lay a hand on me again it will be at your own peril."

"Don't give me any cause to lay a hand on you, and you'll be safe enough."

"When I tell you I think you are trying to swindle my guardian on this Royal Ophir mine deal, I am stating what I believe to be a fact."

"Swindle is a hard term, young man."

"It's the only term to use—sometimes."

"This is not one of the times. Everything in this transaction is open and above board."

"That is, it seems so."

"It is so."

"I have a feeling in my bones that my guardian is being tricked."

"Poppycock!"

"Sneer if you like, but it is my sister's money and mine my guardian is putting into the deal; not yours or his."

"Your guardian is safeguarding your interest in every possible way."

"I don't care if he is. You're shrewd enough to pull the wool over his eyes, and I think you're doing it."

"There's no possible chance to pull the wool over anybody's eyes. It's a straight, legitimate proposition."

"I tell you I have a feeling that it is not."

"You're a man—don't be so childish."

"Childish! Is it childish to wish to keep for my sister and myself what money was left to us?"

"You're a weak-kneed fool, Lansing!"

"Now you are using strong language," the young man answered, his voice trembling with anger. "I give you fair warning of what I am going to do, Terhune."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to hire the best detective in America to look into this mining proposition and see whether it's as straight as you say it is."

"You're going to put a detective on my trail, are you?" hissed Terhune.

"That's my intention."

"I see your game! You're going to fake up some sort of evidence to prove me dishonest and queer this mining deal!"

"If you are honest you have nothing to fear. If dishonest, you'll be unmixed and a million will be saved to these New York and Boston investors."

"Who are you going to hire?"

"Nicholas Carter, if I can get him."

"Carter!" The word leaped fiercely from Terhune's lips, and was followed by a muffled oath. "You're going to get Nick Carter to dog me about New York?"

"If he'll take the case."

"Then you really think I'm dishonest!"

"I think you're a confidence man, Terhune; a swindler, a—"

Like lightning Terhune's hand, which had been thrust into his pocket and stealthily withdrawn, shot toward Lansing's temple.

The hand was armed with a set of murderous knuckles, and the blow laid Lansing half over the rail, silent and motionless.

His limp form hung there for an instant, and Terhune cast a quick glance around.

The coast was clear.

Quickly he lifted the still form and pushed it over the rail.

It splashed into the water.

Save for the noise made by the steamer, complete silence followed.

Terhune gave another glance around, and then vanished through a stateroom door behind him.

For the first time in the last four weeks he felt easy in his mind.

He would not have felt so easy if he had taken the trouble to look on the other side of the boat, in the direction of the Long Island shore.

CHAPTER II.

THE "ROYAL OPHIR" CASE.

There was a knock at the door.

Nick Carter laid aside the daily paper he was reading

and read the name on the card handed him by the servant:

"JOHN LANSING."

Nick gave a low whistle, picked up the paper and looked at it once more and then laid it on the table again.

"Did Mr. Lansing state his business?" he asked.

"No, sir; simply said he must see you at once on a matter of great importance."

"All right. Have him come up here."

The servant withdrew, and a moment later ushered the caller into the room.

Mr. John Lansing was a slender youth, and evidently still in his teens.

His face was pale, and on his left temple there was a patch of courtplaster the size of a quarter.

"Mr. Carter?" queried the young man. "Mr. Nicholas Carter?"

"My name," answered Nick, briefly, his keen eyes on Lansing's face. "Will you sit down?"

John Lansing seated himself.

"I have a peculiar case, Mr. Carter," said he.

"Has it anything to do with your mysterious disappearance from Boston?"

Lansing looked startled, but that expression cleared from his face when Nick motioned toward the newspaper.

"I was just reading about it," said the detective.

"But there might be other John Lansings——"

"Hardly, for it is not a very common name. Besides, you look as though you had had a rough experience lately."

"I'm the man, Mr. Carter. But I didn't disappear from Boston."

"I had already settled that in my mind. A man can't fall off the earth so completely in a city of that size. The account says you left New York on a Fall River boat Monday night, with a Mr. William Terhune, and that the last Mr. Terhune saw of you was in Boston Tuesday forenoon."

"The last Mr. Terhune saw of me was off the Long Island shore at midnight Monday. He struck me on the head and threw me from the boat."

"Ah!" The great detective's interest was growing. "Why should he throw you from the boat?"

"That brings up the matter concerning which I have called to see you, Mr. Carter. You're the only man in New York who can help me, and will you do it?"

"Tell me about the matter first, and then I will answer you."

"I will be as brief as I can," said Lansing.

"My parents are dead, and my sister Louise and I live with our uncle, Horace Montgomery, on West Forty-fourth Street.

"Mr. Montgomery is our guardian, and is the trustee of certain funds which were left to us."

"Between us, Louise and I have some \$500,000 on interest with a trust company.

"This man Terhune came from the West, a month or more ago, and has interested my uncle and some Boston men in a Montana mine which he calls the Royal Ophir.

"Mr. Montgomery, in spite of my objections, is determined to invest this \$500,000 in Terhune's mine, but I am sure that the whole thing is a swindle from start to finish."

"How long have you felt sure that Terhune was a swindler?" interposed Nick.

"I have had a feeling that he was crooked ever since my uncle first introduced him to me."

"Just a 'feeling.' No other evidence prior to what happened on the Sound steamer Monday night?"

"No. But the fact that Terhune hit me on the head and threw me overboard is proof that he considered me a menace to his plans and wanted me out of the way."

"Of course. And then his spreading the report that you disappeared from Boston is another convincing detail."

"Why did he spread that report? Why didn't he say that I committed suicide by jumping from the boat?"

"That would have led to awkward questioning. Not only that, but if you were dead your money would be tied up in the Probate Court, and your uncle could not invest it."

"I see! That had not occurred to me before. What a consummate villain that man Terhune is!"

"How did you escape Monday night?"

"By a lucky chance, and nothing else. I can swim fairly well, and the moment I struck the cool water it revived me."

"I kept myself afloat, and was picked up by two young men in a catboat. These young men were members of a fishing club that had a boathouse on the Sound, and were out for an all-night sail."

"They were close at hand when the steamer passed and I was hurled into the water."

"I see. You do not want your uncle to invest your money in the mine, and he is determined to do it."

"That's it. Terhune is a glib talker, and Uncle Horace is entirely carried away with him."

"Could you not get a restraining order from the court and thus prevent your uncle from using the money?"

"Under my mother's will, Mr. Carter, my guardian has a free hand. I will do Mr. Montgomery the credit of saying that he has gone into the matter in good faith, and he is usually level-headed. In this instance, however, he is playing directly into Terhune's hands."

"It was Monday night when you were picked up by the young men in the catboat. This is Wednesday morning. Where have you been in the meantime?"

"At the boathouse on Long Island, where I gave a fictitious name."

"You wish me to make it appear to Terhune that you are dead?"

"Yes. I feel that I can fight him better in that way."

"That's rather clever in one way, Mr. Lansing. In another way, however, it may be a very foolish move."

"How so?"

"If you went to your uncle and told him how Terhune had attempted your life, you would at once convince him that the Western man was a fraud and thus prevent the investment in the Royal Ophir."

"You do not know my uncle, Mr. Carter. He is investigating the mining proposition, and, if he is satis-

fied with the result of his investigations, the money will be invested."

"Headstrong, is he?"

"Yes, sir; very much set in his way."

"How did you happen to be on the same steamer with Terhune?"

"I was going to Boston to interview some capitalists there who are also intending to put money into the mine. By chance, Terhune was on the same boat. We met and had a long talk. I upbraided him, and—by the way, here is a point that may be of importance. I told Terhune I was going to get you to investigate the mining proposition for me, if I could, and the mere mention of your name made him furious."

"That's when he struck you on the temple and threw you overboard?"

"Yes, sir."

"How is your uncle investigating the Royal Ophir mine?"

"The Boston men sent an expert in whom they have the utmost confidence to Montana to take a sample of ore from the Royal Ophir."

"That sample was not out of the expert's hands, day or night, from the moment it was taken until, in a sealed bag, it was deposited in a New York bank."

"The Boston men and my uncle, accompanied by the expert, will call for the ore this afternoon, take it to an assayer and have it assayed."

"On the result of that assay hangs the investment of a round million of dollars."

"Who is to do the assaying?"

"Cruse & Cupell, near Sixth Avenue and Twenty-third Street."

"Who is the expert?"

"Orlando G. Bates."

"I know Bates, and he's as straight as a string. The assayers are all right, too. Will Terhune be present during the assaying?"

"No; no one but Mr. Bates, my uncle and the Boston men. Will you take the case for me, Mr. Carter?"

"It's hardly a 'case,' Mr. Lansing. You want me to prove to your uncle that the Royal Ophir mine has been 'salted,' as the saying is."

"That's it. I'm sure the mine has been 'salted,' and I'm also sure that neither the expert, nor my uncle, nor the Boston men are clever enough to discover it. You are the only one who can do that, Mr. Carter."

The detective smiled at the young man's confidence. Before he could answer Lansing's question another rap fell on the door and the servant handed in a card bearing the following name:

"WILLIAM TERHUNE."

CHAPTER III.

A FAMILIAR FACE.

"Bring him up," said Nick, to the servant.

When the servant had gone, the detective opened the door of an adjoining apartment.

"You will have to step in here for a few minutes, Mr. Lansing," said he. "Your man Terhune has come to see me."

"Terhune!" exclaimed Lansing.

"Yes. Step in, quick. Be quiet and do not come back until I open the door."

"But what can he want?" murmured the astounded youth, passing into the other room.

"I shall find out very soon."

Nick closed the door, and was seated at his desk, writing, when his second caller entered the study.

"Mr. Carter?"

Nick dropped his pen, whirled around in his chair and got up.

He saw before him a man of forty, or thereabouts, tall, muscular, smooth shaven and wearing a long frock coat, dark trousers, patent leather shoes and a flowing necktie.

In his left hand he held a black "slouch" hat. His right hand was extended and an amiable smile wreathed his face.

Nick took the extended hand, and was surprised to find the palm hard, as though roughened with manual labor.

For a "promoter," dressed as this man was, the fact might have been significant.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Terhune?" asked Nick, when they were both seated.

"I have a case, and there is no one in the city, except yourself, whom I desire to handle it."

"Excuse me a moment while I finish this letter, and then I will give you my attention."

Terhune nodded, picked up the paper Nick had recently laid down, and the detective touched a bell.

"Send Patrick to me," he said to the servant.

He scribbled away for a few seconds, folded the sheet and put it in an envelope, sealed the envelope and wrote the following address:

"Look at this man well."

"Do you know him?"

"Shadow him."

Patsy stood beside the desk when Nick faced around, the "letter" in his hand.

"Here's a letter, Patsy, which I wish you to deliver immediately. You know the party, I think?"

The assistant studied the writing on the envelope.

"No, Nick," he answered, "I don't know him; but I know the address."

"You'll attend to it?"

"Sure."

Patsy left.

"Now, Mr. Terhune," said Nick, "I'm at leisure for a few minutes."

"Have you read this paper?" asked Terhune.

"Yes."

"Then perhaps you recall my name in connection with the disappearance of young John Lansing."

"Oh! Are you the William Terhune mentioned in that account?"

"I am. And it is in relation to John Lansing that I have called on you this morning."

"You want me to find the young man?"

"Yes. I want you to go to Boston by first train and begin a search for him. Lansing's sister and I very much worked up over the young man's disappearance, and I told them I would call here and put you on the case—providing I could get you."

"I'm very sorry," said Nick, "but I could not take the case for two or three days."

"You will be well paid——"

"That is a minor consideration, Mr. Terhune. In two or three days, if you like, I will——"

"That will be too late. In cases of this kind, as you perhaps know, little time should be lost."

"Exactly. For that reason it is strange that you allowed Tuesday to pass without coming to me."

"I was in Boston Tuesday, Mr. Carter."

"There are detectives in Boston, good ones."

"But Nick Carter doesn't live in Boston," said Terhune, with a flattering smile. "The police there are doing their best. Still, the young man's relatives would feel better to know that you had taken the case."

"That is out of the question unless you will wait for two or three days."

"Would not a large retainer tempt you to lay aside your other work and give your immediate attention to this matter?"

"No, sir."

Terhune got up.

"Then I suppose there is nothing else for it but for me to wait."

"Or get some one else," added Nick.

"Who shall I go to?"

"The New York chief of police."

"I'll think about it. Good-morning, Mr. Carter."

Terhune left.

When the front door had closed, the detective admitted John Lansing from the other room.

"The infernal scoundrel!" cried Lansing. "He dared to come here to you to get you to look for me—a man whom he believes he murdered."

"He's a pretty smooth rascal," said the detective.

"Will you help me out in the mine matter, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes."

"Good! My sister's money and mine is as good as saved. I thank you very much, and your bill will be met as soon as presented."

"That will come later. For the present, carry out your present policy—keep in the background, and don't

go about the city very much. Do not even communicate with your sister. Leave that part of it to me, and I will see that she does not worry about you any longer than necessary. Where will I be able to communicate with you?"

Lansing wrote his address on a card.

Then, after thanking Nick again, he left the house.

The detective lighted a cigar and threw himself into a chair.

"Terhune certainly had his nerve with him to call on me as he has done," thought Nick.

"It's plain that he wants to get me out of town, and at once."

"I wonder if he knows Nick Carter never forgets a face?"

"I have seen his face before—but where?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROLL-TOP DESK.

On leaving Nick Carter's house, Terhune walked rapidly off down the street.

At the first corner he passed a typical East Side tough, leaning against a lamp-post rolling a huge cigar between his teeth.

Stepping out into the street, Terhune hailed an open electric car.

As he got aboard, well forward, the tough jumped on the rear and took one of the seats reserved for smokers.

At Canal Street the Western man changed to a cross-town car, getting off again at Vestry Street.

He had not looked behind him, or displayed any nervousness whatever.

But nevertheless it seemed as if he had an idea he might be followed.

Vestry and Canal meet at an acute angle, forming a "V" shaped point.

Terhune walked down Vestry Street for a few doors, then hastily turned to the right, mounted a short flight of steps and vanished through a dingy doorway.

The tough was close after him.

Passing through a long, dark hall, Terhune made an exit through a door opening on Canal Street.

The tough, apparently, did not come out of the building.

The man who did follow Terhune out onto Canal Street looked more like a laborer than he did like a tough.

The Westerner, walking leisurely, made his way to the next block and halted in front of a four-story building.

There was a moving van back to the curb in front, and at the very top of the building two men were engaged in rigging a block and tackle.

Terhune came to a halt before a door leading into a hallway and from there, for the first time, he took a survey of the street behind him.

The laborer, his hands in his pockets and a cob pipe in his mouth, was watching the riggers at work on the roof.

There was nothing suspicious about the laborer, and Terhune passed into the building and started upstairs.

When he reached the head of the first flight the laborer was in the doorway.

Something had been shouted by one of the men on the roof.

"All right," the laborer called back, "I'll bring it up to ye."

Thereupon Patsy—for, of course, the supposed laborer was none other than Nick Carter's assistant—rushed upstairs with a coil of rope.

He passed Terhune on the second flight.

At the top of the third flight he waited and listened until he heard the Westerner start up from the foot.

That was Patsy's signal to make for the narrow passage leading to the skylight and the roof.

"There ye are," he said, as he tossed the coil of rope to the riggers.

Then, without loss of a moment, he returned to the fourth floor.

A door was just closing down the hall as Patsy stepped out of the passage.

The detective was too late to see the man who en-

tered the room, but he was fairly certain it was Terhune.

Proceeding noiselessly to the door, he halted and listened.

Voices, pitched in a low key, reached him.

It was impossible to distinguish the spoken words, although Patsy strained his ears in the attempt.

He was anxious to overhear something which would make it absolutely sure that he was on the right trail.

Stooping, he tried the old-fashioned trick of looking through the keyhole, but found that a hat had been hung from the knob inside, effectually covering the small aperture.

Raising himself erect, Patsy made a quick survey to left and right.

Instinctively, he came to the conclusion that the door to the right of the one before which he was standing was more promising than the one on the left.

He went to the door and tried it, but found it locked.

A skeleton key admitted him with very little trouble, and he found himself in an empty room.

A door led from this room into the one which Terhune had entered, but it was closed and probably fastened.

Again Patsy tried to look through the keyhole, but this time he found the opening stuffed with paper.

"It's dead sure they do things in that room they don't want people to get on to," thought Patsy, "and that proves, in a way, that my man is there. Still, I'd like to get a fair and square look at him."

Sinking down on his knees, he laid his ear against the crack at the edge of the door.

The talkers were still guarded in their tones, and he could hear nothing.

He remained on his knees, however, and presently he heard a movement as of some one rising.

Steps crossed the floor.

"This is getting infernally tiresome," said a voice. "Gillman is slow in keeping his appointment."

"Something has happened to detain him," said another voice.

"Let's go out and get a drink. Probably he'll be here by the time we get back."

"I'm with you, old man."

Some one else arose and crossed the floor.

Then the door was unlocked, opened, closed and locked again, and steps could be heard passing down the hall.

Rising quickly, Patsy went to a window overlooking the street, raised it and looked down.

He was rewarded by seeing Terhune come out accompanied by a short, thick-set man with an iron-gray mustache.

The second man looked like another Westerner.

"Bully!" exclaimed Patsy, withdrawing and closing the window. "When Gillman gets here I must be in that other room."

He went back to the door communicating with the other room.

A few moments' work with a knife blade sufficed to pick out the paper, and a skeleton key did the rest.

After closing and locking the door from the other side, Patsy carefully replaced the paper in the keyhole and turned for a look at the room he was then in.

It was almost as bare as the apartment he had just left.

A huge roll-top desk was in evidence and three common chairs—nothing more.

The roll-top of the desk was pushed half up.

Patsy pushed it all the way and looked into the pigeon-holes.

They were empty.

He opened the drawers.

They were empty, too.

"It looks as though this might be moving day," thought the detective, thinking of the van he had seen out in front. "Gee, but that's a regular granddaddy desk. They never got it in through the hall door, and I'll bet on it."

While he stood there, taking in the situation, his quick ear caught the sound of footsteps on the stairs.

The Westerners were coming back.

The detective looked around for a place to conceal himself.

Opposite the door by which he had entered there was another, leading into the room on the other side.

But even if that door was unlocked, and he could get into that room, he would be no better off than he was a little while before.

He flashed another inquiring look around.

There was absolutely no place in which he could hide himself, unless—

He looked at the desk and then measured himself with his eyes.

The steps were coming along the hall, now, and it was too late for him to use the skeleton key and get out of the room, even if he had wanted to.

Without pausing another instant, he crawled into the desk and pulled at the roll-top until he got it down.

It was a tight squeeze, and when the roll-top descended the lock snapped.

But Patsy did not care for that.

The only thing that worried him was that one of the two men might notice that the roll-top was shut and not half open.

That was not a very long chance, however, and, anyway, Patsy had to take it.

The door was unlocked, opened, and the men came in.

From the footfalls alone Patsy's keen ear could tell that there were three men instead of two.

"We were up here waiting for you, Gillman," said a voice.

"If I had come any sooner I'd have missed that high ball," answered a second voice.

"When you turn the key, Terhune," observed a third voice, "don't neglect to hang that slouch of yours over the knob."

The wearer of the slouch hat was the man Patsy was shadowing, so he had learned the fellow's name.

The key scraped in the lock.

"There you are, Starlick," answered Terhune. "The key fills up the hole enough, I should think. Besides, we won't keep Gillman over two minutes."

"Long enough to give me a retainer," chuckled Gillman.

"How much of a retainer do you want?"

"Five hundred. After that, and before these capitalists turn over their good money, I want forty-five hundred more."

"That's big pay for fifteen minutes' work."

"It's no pay at all for the risk I run."

"Well, well, never mind. Here's your five hundred."

"Thanks. And the cigarettes?"

"Here; two boxes of them."

"Heavens, man! How many do you expect me to smoke during that fifteen minutes?"

"As many as you can. The more the better."

"Where do I get the forty-five hundred?"

"At Boucicault's, Hamilton Street, Brooklyn."

"Don't try any of your Montana tricks with me, you two. I won't stand for it, and I'll queer your game if it lands me in the pen."

"Don't squeal till we throw you down," put in Starlick.

"Bring a duplicate assay certificate, Gillman," said Terhune, "and you'll get your bonus without any question."

"Then I'll pull out. You fellows may depend on me."

"If you queer this deal, without our throwing you down, you'll never live to queer another."

"Don't worry about me. I'm out for the stuff and this looks like easy money. What time shall I be at Boucicault's?"

"Be there at ten."

"Good!"

Gillman went away, and Terhune and Starlick continued their conversation.

"I'm as afraid as the devil all the while I'm in New York, Starlick," said Terhune.

"On account of this deal?"

"Thunder, no! On account of Nick Carter. He only saw me for about a minute, some time ago, and a clean shave and these clothes have changed me. I'd be willing to take my oath that he never recognized me when I called on him this morning, and yet——"

Terhune paused.

"Yet what?" urged Starlick.

"Oh, the devil! I'm losing my nerve, I reckon. But you never can tell what Carter thinks, or what he's going to do. If I could have got him out of town for the next forty-eight hours I'd be feeling easier, this minute. Hello! What's that?"

A hand tried the door. Failing to gain entrance, the same hand banged on the panel.

"It's all right," answered Starlick. "No need putting your hand to your hip, old man."

Patsy heard the door open and a gruff voice from the hall:

"We've got the riggin' fixed and are already ter lower the desk."

"All right. There it is."

"Any idee how long it'll be kept in storage?"

"No. A year, perhaps."

Patsy was doing some hard thinking.

He had no desire to spend a year in storage, and it

was necessary for him, somehow, to separate himself from the desk.

To do it then was out of the question.

The workmen went to the windows and took out the sash.

Patsy could hear them, and he could also hear Terhune and Starlick moving about the room.

Finally the workmen came to the desk, took hold of it, and shoved it across the room.

"Empty, boss?" queried one of the men.

"Yes," answered Starlick.

"Mighty heavy for an empty desk."

"It's an old-fashioned roll-top, and that's the reason."

"I guess the riggin' 'll hold it all right, but I didn't figger on havin' quite so much heft."

"Better be sure, my man. I wouldn't want the desk smashed."

"I'll risk it. If it's smashed it comes out o' my pay."

There were other things that couldn't come out of the man's pay, if the rigging let go, and Patsy was as near in a flutter as his nerve ever allowed him to be.

A hawser was put around the desk both ways.

Then Patsy heard a hook made fast.

A moment later one of the men went down.

In three minutes, the big roll-top desk was out of the window, swinging in midair.

The rope creaked and something gave so that the piece of furniture dropped a foot.

"Steady!" whooped the man whose pay was to be docked in case of accident.

"Yes, for Heaven's sake," muttered Patsy.

Down went the desk, the man inside breathing only when necessary until it safely rested on the walk.

To load the desk in the wagon did not take much time, and the van hadn't gone a block before Patsy had exerted sufficient pressure to break the lock.

The rattle of the vehicle drowned the noise he had to make, and he pushed up the top, slipped to the floor of the van, and dropped out.

The two men on the seat of the van drove on, all unconscious of what had happened, and Patsy, the moment he struck the sidewalk, drew a sleeve across his dripping forehead.

"That was a corker!" he muttered. "I wonder if I've lost the trail?"

He had lost the trail, as he quickly found, for Terhune and Starlick had vanished from the building in which they had been but a few minutes before.

"I'll slide around to the house and put Nick next," said Patsy to himself. "He may want to give me fresh instructions."

Nick Carter was not at the house, however, and neither was Chick.

They had gone out together, Patsy was told.

He waited a long time for one or the other to return, but they did not come.

"I'll have to go to Boucicault's," thought Patsy, "and I can't wait any longer for Nick."

Before he went he left the following memorandum on Nick's desk:

"Terhune and his side partner, Starlick, are to meet a man named Gillman in Boucicault's place, Hamilton Street, Brooklyn, at ten to-night. Look out for a couple of boxes of doped cigarettes. Patsy."

CHAPTER V.

A SMOOTH GAME.

On Wednesday afternoon a prosperous-looking gentleman, of apparently about fifty years of age, entered the private office of Cruse & Cupell, on Twenty-third Street.

"Mr. Cruse?" he asked, halting at a desk.

"Cruse is out," answered a man at the desk. "I'm Cupell."

"My card."

The caller handed over a bit of pasteboard bearing the name, "Mr. Jefferson Jones."

"I'm from Albany," went on Mr. Jones, "and I have run down to be present at the assay of the Royal Ophir ore."

"Ah," murmured Mr. Cupell. "Won't you sit down, Mr. Jones? There's a paper at your elbow. I expect Mr. Bates and the other gentlemen at any moment."

Jefferson Jones took the chair and the paper.

In a few minutes the expert entered with three other gentlemen, the expert carrying a small bag, bound with a cord and sealed in half a dozen different places.

Cupell welcomed the party and then presented Jefferson Jones.

Jones did not pay much attention to the Boston men, nor to Bates, the expert, but he gave more than casual attention to Mr. Horace Montgomery.

"Why do you wish to see this assay, Mr. Jones?" asked Montgomery.

"Merely to satisfy myself as to the value of the Royal Ophir mine."

"With a view to investing?"

"That remains to be seen."

"I don't think there will be a chance for you. The Royal Ophir, I am satisfied, is a good thing, and myself and these other two gentlemen want it all to ourselves."

A slight smile wreathed about the lips of Jefferson Jones.

"I suppose you won't object to letting me see the assay made?" he asked.

"Certainly not; only don't deceive yourself with false hopes, that's all."

Bates, the expert, here interjected a few remarks.

"This is the Royal Ophir ore, gentlemen," said he. "I took a fair sample from the main vein of the mine, sacked and sealed it on the spot, and the sample was not out of my hands until deposited in the bank, from which we just took it."

"I will take an oath that it has not been tampered with in any way. On the result of this assay I assure you that you can spend one million, or ten millions, and be perfectly confident that you are going into the deal with your eyes open."

"There, Mr. Cupell." The expert handed the sack to the assayer. "It is understood that we are all to be present during the assaying."

"That is my understanding," said Cupell. "This way, gentlemen."

He opened a door leading into one of the work-rooms.

A dark-faced young man of twenty or thereabouts, wearing a white apron and smoking a cigarette, was busying himself about the room.

On an iron slab Cupell opened the ore sack and emptied the pieces of ore out on the slab for general inspection.

Jefferson Jones, Montgomery and the two Boston men began to look at the samples.

"I don't think you ought to touch this rock, gentlemen," said Cupell.

Examination of the ore was instantly stopped.

"I don't think any of us would put 'salt' into this proposition," said Montgomery.

But, even as he spoke, he cast a suspicious look at Jones, of Albany.

Jones looked innocent enough.

Humming to himself and holding his hands behind him, he was giving his attention to the strange instruments arranged around the room.

Suddenly he asked if there was any drinking water about the place.

Cupell told him he would find a water cooler in the office.

Jones sauntered into the office, took a drink, and then passed into the hall.

"Here, Chick," he said to a man who was waiting there, "take this to Clarkson, around the corner on Sixth Avenue, and have him rush the assay through."

"Sure."

"Then wait for me downstairs."

"I'll be there."

Nick—for, of course, "Jones" was none other than the detective—gave his assistant two small pieces of Royal Ophir ore.

Chick went away and Nick returned to the workroom, drying his lips on a handkerchief.

The ore was being put through a small crusher by the young man who wore the apron and was smoking the cigarette.

Cupell watched every move of the young man with eagle-eyed vigilance.

"That's fine enough, Gillman," said Cupell; "now use your muller."

The "muller" was a heavy iron roller that worked on the slab.

Gillman took the crushed ore, held it on the slab, and then went over it again and again with the roller.

This part of the operation took some time, and Gillman smoked three cigarettes.

Nick noticed that he never removed a cigarette from his mouth, after once lighting it, until it was smoked almost to the gold tip.

When the ashes accumulated, he gave his head a shake and they fell into the ore he was crushing.

"You'll smoke yourself to death, Gillman," said Cupell.

"I expect so," was the lugubrious answer. "I've formed the habit, though, and I can't break myself."

"I haven't any patience with a cigarette smoker," said one of the Boston men, with a shudder.

"Give me a cigar every time," said the other Boston man.

"Oh, I don't know," said Nick; "I enjoy a cigarette now and then myself. If Gillman would oblige me with one I believe I'd keep him company."

"Certainly," answered Gillman, readily enough.

Taking the cigarette box from his pocket he handed it to Nick.

Nick took one of the "paper pipes," lighted it and returned the box.

A moment later the detective sat down, a little way from the group around the muller-board.

When ready to knock the ashes from the cigarette he brought out a silver match case, emptied it of matches, and carefully deposited the ashes inside.

When he had finished the cigarette, Gillman was "quartering down" the sample.

The powdered ore was then mixed with fluxes, put into little earthenware dishes, and shoved into a furnace.

When the dishes were drawn from the furnace there was a drop of bullion in each one.

This drop was put into a glass parting flask with nitric acid, the flask was heated and the gold in the drop of bullion was separated from the other metals.

All that then remained was to weigh it.

This was done on a pair of scales so finely adjusted that they would weigh a pencil mark on a scrap of paper.

In two hours time Cupell had signed the assay certificates, and Montgomery and the Boston men were wildly jubilant.

The assay ran \$960 to the ton!

"There's a five-foot vein of that rock!" declared Bates, "and it's a true fissure—which means that it will 'go down' and get better with every foot."

"I wonder if I could get a little of that good thing?" Nick inquired.

"No, sir, never!" cried Montgomery.

"We want it all for ourselves," said one of the Boston men.

"Sure thing," averred the other.

"We'll close the deal to-morrow at ten o'clock, at my house," said Montgomery. "You'll be there, gentlemen?"

"Certainly we will," answered the first Boston man.

"And bring our certified checks with us," added the other.

The capitalists went away, Bates soon followed and Nick sat down in Cupell's private office.

"A great mine, that, Mr. Jones," said Cupell.

"Looks like it," returned Nick. "Could you do a little assaying for me, Mr. Cupell?"

"Why, yes, certainly. I'll have Gillman——"

"No, not Gillman. I want you to attend to it personally and send Gillman out somewhere while it's being done."

"It isn't possible you suspect there is anything wrong with that assay?"

"It's immaterial what I suspect, Mr. Cupell." The detective walked close to the assayer and bent over him. "My real name is not Jones but Carter——"

"Nick Carter?"

"Yes."

"And you were here to watch and see that the assay was properly made?"

"I was here for a purpose. How long will it take you to make the assay?"

"Is it an assay of ore?"

"Of cigarette ashes."

Cupell jumped from his chair.

"Great Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Can it be possible that—— No, no! You are wrong, Mr. Carter. Gillman has worked for me for two years and he's as straight as a string."

"How long will it take you to make the assay?"

"An hour."

"Then send Gillman out somewhere for an hour. Be sure and have him come back here this afternoon, however, and don't give him cause to think that there is anything wrong. Understand?"

"I understand."

"All right. I will return presently."

Nick put the silver match case in the assayer's hands and left the office.

Downstairs, near the edge of the sidewalk, a shabbily dressed man was selling some mechanical toys that ran by clock work.

Nick kicked over one of the toys as it ran in front of him.

"Ain't yer got no eyes?" blustered the curbstone merchant. "That'll stand ye in fifty cents."

Nick picked up the broken toy and saw a folded paper inside of it.

He deftly abstracted the paper and tossed the tin automobile at Chick's feet.

"Here's your money," he said, tendering a bill. "There's no sense in running those things all over the walk."

Chick dived into his pocket for change.

"There's a man in a brown derby and gray clothes around the corner keeping track of this doorway," said Chick, in a low tone.

"Tall?"

"No, short and thickset."

"Keep your eye on him. Also take a good look at

that young man who's just coming out of the doorway now."

Gillman came out and Chick took his measure.

Nick walked back into the building and was soon in the assay office.

On his way he looked at the assay certificate brought by Chick.

"No trace of metal," read the certificate.

Nick gave a whistle as he dropped into a Cruse & Cupell's office.

"Salted for a million," he muttered. "It's a smooth game, and I'd give a hundred this minute if I could recall where I have seen Terhune before."

In a little while Cupell rushed into the office excitedly.

"What's the result?" asked Nick, calmly.

"Those cigarette ashes assay close to fifty thousand to the ton!" declared the assayer.

"I wish I had a few tons," remarked Nick, with a dry laugh.

"To think that I have been bamboozled by that assistant of ours! I must call in those assay certificates and——"

"Do nothing of the kind, just yet," cut in Nick.

"But are you aware of the position it places me in? Every assay certificate is vouched for by us the moment it is signed. And then, to have the hocus-pocus worked right in our own office—— But, by Jove, it was clever!"

"Certainly it was," said Nick, "and Gillman was only a tool and not the leader in the swindling game. What I want to do is to get the whole gang. If you'll lay back on your oars a little while, I shall succeed."

"But to-morrow morning at ten o'clock a million dollars will be paid over to these swindlers for the Royal Ophir mine."

"It won't be paid over," averred Nick.

"You assure me of that?"

"Yes. What I want you to do is to keep this to yourself. Don't let Gillman suspect that you know what he has done. Keep him here until five o'clock and then let him go."

"But my responsibility——"

"I'll take your responsibility on my own shoulders."

"Very well, Mr. Carter, I will do as you say."

Nick went away.

"The young fellow had a talk with the chap in the brown derby," Chick said, as his chief walked slowly past.

"Stay here and watch," Nick returned. "I'll be back in an hour. You'll recognize me. I'm going to shadow the young fellow, and if the man in the brown derby follows me you follow him."

Nick went to police headquarters and took a look through the "Rogues' Gallery."

He could find nothing, however, that refreshed his memory as to Terhune.

On his return to Twenty-third Street he stepped into a deserted hallway and remained there long enough to make a few changes in his disguise.

When he came out he looked at least twenty years younger.

There was a cigar store opposite the building in which Cruse & Cupell had their assay office, and Nick stepped in there, bought a weed, and stood leaning on the counter, smoking and watching the doorway across the street.

It was five o'clock and time for Gillman to show himself.

Nick had not long to wait.

The clerk came briskly out and Nick went after him.

Just beyond the corner a man in a brown derby dropped in behind Nick.

Chick, keenly alive to the situation, picked up the single tin automobile that he had left, pushed it into his pocket, and trailed along in the rear of the man in the brown derby.

From the opposite side of the street a neatly dressed man in a sack suit and black Fedora hat took in the situation and gave vent to a muttered oath.

"I like the lay-out, Mr. Nick Carter," he said to himself. "Keep on after Gillman and you'll find yourself in a hornet's nest. You'll never live to put those Boston men next to my game, or to bring me to book for that Montana job. Now for Hamilton Street."

CHAPTER VI.

BOUCICAULT'S.

At certain times Nick Carter had intuitions that amounted almost to positive knowledge.

It was the "detective instinct," amplified by years of intelligent practice.

In the present instance he believed that he would be shadowed, and he even figured out to himself the successive links in the chain that brought the conclusion.

Gillman had suspected him and had conveyed his sus-

picions to the man in the brown derby at the same time that he had reported the result of the assay.

The man in the brown derby could not be Terhune, but some other member of the gang.

It was this man whom Nick had cast for the part of a shadow, and hence Chick's instructions to "shadow the shadow."

The one uncertain element of the situation was Terhune, but Nick was depending on Patsy to take care of the Westerner.

Could Nick have been made familiar with the contents of a certain note, at that moment lying on his desk at home, there would have been a decided change in the plan of operations.

Gillman appeared to be very well satisfied with himself, for he carried a cane and swung it jauntily as he walked.

He paid no attention to the ground behind him, and that might mean one of two things—either he did not think he was followed, or did not care.

At Sixth Avenue he hailed a downtown car.

It was an open car, and Nick got aboard three seats behind him.

The man in the brown derby followed the car in a hansom, a difficult but not impossible task considering the slow speed at which the car had to travel in that part of the city and at that busy hour.

The hardest part of the work fell to Chick.

He could not very well get aboard the car with Gillman and Nick, and, as there was no cab in sight which he could hire, he slipped a five-dollar bill to an expressman and told him to keep the hansom in sight.

Thus Gillman, virtually shadowed by three, made his way to his destination, which proved to be a restaurant in the lower part of the town—a place famous for the low price of its "table d'hôte dinner with wine."

There he and Nick had dinner, the man in the brown derby remaining on the walk outside and Chick watching from across the street.

The meal over, the tactics were continued, Gillman leading the chase to Brooklyn, crossing by ferry and winding up at Boucicault's, on Hamilton Street.

It was between eight and nine in the evening, and Hamilton Street was just "waking up."

A sleepy and quiet thoroughfare by day, it is anything but sleepy and quiet under the gas and electric lights.

"Speak-easies" and other haunts of vice abound, and

not the least among the lawless resorts was Boucicault's.

There were three stories to the building, and Boucicault occupied all three, in addition to a good sized basement.

Of the basement more will be said hereafter.

The main floor was given up to a saloon and restaurant.

The floors above constituted the hotel part of the establishment, and here many a drunken victim had been plucked by the human harpies who made the place their rendezvous.

If darker crimes than robbery were meditated, the intended victim was conducted to the gloomy and vault-like regions under the saloon.

A long, low bar ran along the left-hand wall; off to the right were half a dozen tables; in the rear were four or five small rooms partitioned off.

When Gillman entered the dive it was half filled with a roaring complement of sailors, every one in the lot considerably more than "half seas over."

The air was thick with tobacco smoke, heavy with the fumes of cheap beer and resounding with sea-songs—every song pitched in a different key and sung in a different language.

Nick Carter had established his case and was ready to arrest Terhune.

What he wanted, however, was to make a clean haul of the entire gang, and to this end he had shadowed Gillman.

He was now certain that Boucicault's was the rendezvous of the swindlers, and he followed Gillman through the fog of smoke and saw him vanish into one of the rear rooms.

The time had come when the detective thought it would be as well to bring matters to an issue with the assayer's clerk, find out what he could from him, and then turn him over to the police for safe keeping.

Advancing to the door of the room entered by Gillman, Nick tried the knob.

The door was locked, and he applied his knuckles to the panel.

"Who's there?" called a voice.

"Terhune."

The door was unbolted and flung open and Nick stepped inside.

Without taking his eyes off Gillman, Nick closed the door and shoved the bolt.

The room was about ten feet square, had paneled side walls and contained a table and four chairs.

It was lighted by an incandescent bulb, pendant from the ceiling.

Gillman showed a good deal of surprise when he discovered that the newcomer was not Terhune.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, his right hand groping under his coat. "Who are you and what's your game?"

"My game is to call yours, Gillman," answered Nick, sternly, his right hand in his coat pocket. "Bring that hand out in front of you! I'm covering you with a gun."

Gillman brought the hand slowly to the required position.

"You've been crowding me pretty close for the last hour or two," said he. "What do you want, anyhow?"

"I want you."

With his left hand Nick brought out a pair of handcuffs.

"What do you want me for?" queried Gillman, sweeping his eyes shiftily around the room.

"For smoking that brand of gold-filled cigarettes this afternoon."

That was the point where Gillman began to lose his nerve.

"I—I don't understand," he stammered.

"Yes, you do," answered Nick. "Put up your wrists."

"Don't you do it, Gillman!"

This counter-command came from the side of the room.

Out of the corners of his eyes Nick could see that a panel in the wall had slid noiselessly back.

A square opening was revealed, framing a man's head and shoulders.

The man wore a brown derby hat and held a revolver, whose point was levelled at the detective's breast.

A triumphant smile began to show itself on Gillman's face; but the smile vanished as a second head appeared in the opening and another voice echoed sharply through the room.

"Put on the darbies, Nick! If this fellow tries to pull the trigger it will be all day with him."

It was Chick.

He was behind the other man and was pressing the muzzle of a revolver against the back of his head.

A baffled oath broke from the man in the derby hat.

Nick, realizing that there was no time to be lost, was about to adjust the handcuffs.

Before he could do it, however, a rap fell on the door.

Silence followed.

The rap was repeated, more emphatically.

"Ask who's there, Gillman," whispered Nick, bringing the weapon out of his pocket and making a significant movement with it.

"Who's there?" inquired Gillman.

"Terhune."

Quick as lightning Nick put away the handcuffs and developed a second revolver.

Covering Gillman with the gun in his right hand, Nick turned partly around.

"Tell him to come in," he whispered again.

As Gillman carried out the order, Nick pushed back the bolt with the muzzle of the weapon held in his right hand.

Then two things happened and happened simultaneously.

The incandescent light was turned off, leaving the room in total darkness, and a rush of heavy feet followed the bursting in of the door.

Nick discharged his revolvers, but the rush of his enemies was not stayed.

He was assailed from all sides, and when he found the quarters too close for revolver work, he gripped the weapons by the barrel and clubbed them to right and left.

But the odds were overwhelming.

In the midst of his desperate struggle a savage blow on the head sent him down.

The shouts and curses of his assailants died away in his ears, he felt them piling on top of him, and then he remembered nothing more.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEATH CHAMBER.

Nick opened his eyes in darkness.

Not a ray of light could be seen at any point in the surrounding gloom, and a silence as of the grave reigned all around.

Under him was a hard stone floor, and from the dank, moldy smell of the place he thought he must be in a cellar—presumably the basement under Boucicault's.

His head was throbbing painfully, and he was lying on his bound arms and wrists.

His ankles were also bound.

"Well, here's a go!" he exclaimed aloud.

The words echoed hollowly through the place, and had hardly left Nick's lips before another voice came from a little distance.

"Hello! Is that you, Nick?"

"Chick! What are you doing here?"

"Not a thing. Can't."

"Trussed up?"

"Wrist and ankle."

"The same gang that laid me out took care of you."

"We had an enemy in our rear and he set the long-shoremen onto us."

"The enemy in the rear was Terhune."

"Sure."

"And where was Patsy that he couldn't take care of Terhune?"

"Something may have happened to the boy. These Westerners weren't born yesterday."

"They're clever in their way; but they overshot the mark when they put you and me in the same cell."

"You bet! If I can't get you loose with my teeth I'll write myself down as a has-been. Roll over this way."

Nick rolled toward the point from which Chick's voice came.

As his body turned he felt something in his pocket.

It was his pocket lamp undoubtedly, and its presence proved that Terhune and his pals hadn't had time for a very exhaustive search through their victims' clothes.

"This must be the cellar under Boucicault's," remarked Chick, as he twisted his body around until it lay parallel with Nick's, and directly behind.

"When Terhune and his pals brought us down here," returned Nick, "they evidently planned that we weren't to leave until we were carried feet first."

"Terhune wants you out of the way, Nick, so he can work his million-dollar graft without being bothered."

Chick's hands were bound behind him, just as Nick's were, and he had to locate the cords by brushing his face against his chief's arms.

Presently he got to work with his teeth.

"This will be a good long job," he said, pausing. "Some sailor put on this rope, and the easiest way to get it off is to chew it in two."

"All right," answered Nick.

After half an hour of hard labor, Nick pulled his hands apart and brought them around in front of him.

"Now for a little light," said he.

Sitting up on the stone floor, he brought out his little pocket-lamp—which was one of the things he always carried with him—and pressed the spring that released the electric current.

A shaft of bright light pierced the gloom.

Nick flashed the gleam slowly around.

He and his assistant saw that they were in a vaulted chamber, perhaps a dozen feet square.

The walls and roof were of stone.

There were no openings anywhere—that is, none that could be seen.

"How the dickens did they get us in here?" asked Chick.

"Possibly they lowered us down from the top. There may be a trap in the roof of the vault. Hello! What's this? A knife, by George!"

In sweeping the ray of light across the floor it had struck upon a gleaming object that lay less than a half dozen feet away.

Nick reached for it.

It was a pearl-handled knife, such as gentlemen carry.

On a piece of silver set into the pearl there were two initials.

"'W. H.,'" said Nick, reading the letters. "Thunder!"

"What now?" inquired Chick.

Nick turned the knife over so that the position of the two letters were reversed.

"Upside down," said he, "W. H. becomes H. M."

"What of it?"

"Nothing now," Nick answered, quietly, opening the knife's largest blade. "One of the men who brought us here must have dropped the knife. Turn over, Chick, and I'll cut off your ropes."

Chick whirled over and was soon freed of the bonds about his wrists and ankles.

Nick then cut the cords from his own feet, and the two detectives arose and stretched their cramped limbs.

"Wonder if I shot anybody up there during the set-to?" Nick muttered, closing the knife-blade and slipping the knife into his pocket.

"Give it up," answered Chick. "I was down and out about as soon as you were. The instant the light was turned off somebody let me have it full from behind. Great Scott! My head's buzzing yet."

"Mine, too."

"I wonder if I've been touched?" Chick began, turning his pockets inside out. "Oh, no, I haven't been touched," he remarked, dryly; "I've been grabbed. I haven't got so much as a toothpick left. Those long-shoremen probably got the rake-off for their trouble."

"I have nothing left but the pocket-lamp," said Nick. "In some way they overlooked that. The thing for us to do is to get out. I have a pressing engagement at Montgomery's house in Forty-fourth Street, tomorrow morning at ten. What time do you think it is now?"

"No idea."

"It can't be more than nine or ten."

Picking up a small piece of stone that lay on the floor, Nick started along one of the walls, tapping on every rock.

Chick took his cue and began doing likewise. Suddenly Nick paused.

"Smell anything, Chick?"

"I was just going to ask you the same question."

"What do you think it is?"

"Gas."

"That's what I think."

Nick flashed the light on his assistant's face and saw that it had become exceedingly grave.

Chick realized what the game was, and it was enough to make him sober.

"They intend to kill us with that gas," said he.

"And they'll do it," answered Nick, grimly, "if we can't find the jet and plug it up."

The incandescent light in the pocket-lamp, of course, would not ignite the escaping gas, and Nick flashed the penciled beam to every point of the side walls, the floor and the roof.

Not a sign of a gas-pipe could be seen.

But the gas was coming from somewhere, and coming in a quantity that would soon fill the chamber.

Breathing was already exceedingly difficult.

"Go on tapping the walls," gasped Nick. "If we don't find a way to escape, or get next to that gas plug, we'll be laid out cold."

Goaded by the foul atmosphere, which was rapidly becoming more and more poisonous, the two detectives hastily tapped the walls to their full extent.

They found nothing.

"It must come from the roof," said Nick.

His voice was hoarse and rasping, and his lungs felt as though compressed under a ton's weight.

"How are we going to do any searching up there?" queried Chick, rising on his tiptoes and stretching his arms. "I can't come within three feet of the ceiling."

"Take me on your shoulders," said Nick.

This plan was carried out without loss of time.

Sitting astride Chick's broad shoulders Nick was able to reach the roof.

Beginning at one of the end walls, they proceeded to cover the flat stones of the ceiling with the utmost care.

"I can't stand this much longer," said Chick, staggering, and only saving himself and Nick a fall by a quick effort. "This gas seems to sap all my strength."

"Hang to it, old man," returned Nick. "By Jupiter, I've struck it! Let me down, Chick."

"If you've found the pipe, Nick, plug it up."

"I haven't found the pipe, and we can't stop the escaping gas."

"Can't?" echoed Chick.

"No." Nick jumped from his assistant's shoulders. "It comes between the joints of those roof-stones. If we had tow, and could caulk up every crack in the roof, we might save ourselves. But that's out of the question."

"What a devilish contrivance!" exclaimed Chick.

"It's devilish enough to do for us if we can't find our way out of this hole."

"You might look for a trap in the roof."

"As soon as you're able to bear my weight again, I'll try."

"Try now, old man. Every second is worth its weight in gold."

Nick tried to mount Chick's shoulders, but Chick was too far gone and could not hold him up.

"You get on my back," said Nick.

But the deadly fumes had already weakened the detectives so that it was impossible for them to continue their search for an exit.

"Slip off your coat, wrap it around your head, and get down on your knees, your face to the floor."

Nick made the suggestions in a quick voice, at the same time carrying them into effect himself.

In this manner a temporary relief was obtained.

The foulest air lay near the roof.

It would be only a question of time, however, until every particle of air in the chamber would be too deadly to sustain life.

The light was still burning, and Nick, with an awkward movement, turned the ray upon his companion.

Chick had straightened out along the floor and was lying still and motionless.

"I guess it's all day with us," thought Nick. "To think that we are to be done to death like this, and die like rats in a trap!"

He felt his senses going and fell from his knees.

As he did so, and just at the last moment of consciousness, he thought he saw one of the blocks in the floor begin to rise.

Was it an illusion of his disordered senses?

It could not be!

For, as the stone arose, a draught of fresh air came through the opening it left in the floor.

Nick inhaled a great draught of it and started to his knees once more.

The ray from the pocket-lamp was focussed upon the stone.

Nick turned the ray slightly and saw the face of a man standing with head and shoulders through the trap.

"Patsy!" he called, in a hoarse voice.

"Nick, by gum!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CIGARETTE MACHINE.

Patsy had arrived right in the Nick of time.

He had not tried to get to the saloon before ten o'clock, and he showed up there in the guise of a Swede sailor, "three sheets in the wind."

Terhune was not there, and neither was Gillman, nor Starlick—the man in the brown derby hat.

Patsy, of course, only knew Terhune by sight, but he felt sure that he could recognize the others by their voices.

Failing to find all or either of the three, he caught a low-pitched conversation coming from two long-shoremen in one corner.

One remark, which he caught in passing, electrified him.

"It was that prize landlubber, Nick Carter, and his mate, that's who it was."

Feigning drunkenness, Patsy flopped into a chair and sprawled out on a table, his head in his arms.

"Was the pickin's good?" asked one of the men.

"Tollable."

"And what was done with 'em?"

"They're down below."

"Will they ever show above the hatches agin?"

"Not this v'yage."

Marking the first speaker well, Patsy got up and staggered out.

His manner changed when he got clear of the dive, and he rushed away in the direction of the corner.

He was not long in finding an officer, and, after showing his badge and telling who he was, he informed the policeman that Nick Carter was in a bad way at Boucicault's.

The officer gave a low whistle, a couple of patrolmen were picked up, and the four of them returned to the dive.

To arrest the man whom Patsy had heard telling about Nick to his companion, was the work of only a few moments.

The fellow resisted and denied strenuously having raised a hand against the detective.

A search of his clothes, however, developed Nick's watch and one of his revolvers.

Patsy recognized the articles, and the longshoreman was scared into leading the officers to the place where the two detectives had been confined.

They came up under the chamber and effected an entrance by means of a rusty old lever which worked the moveable stone slab.

Nick and Chick were dragged out into the fresher air.

While Patsy was busying himself with them, the officers went upstairs and began a hunt for Boucicault and for any other men connected with the outrage.

Boucicault had vanished—a habit he had when any particularly murderous bit of work had been "pulled off" in his den.

When he appeared in court he usually proved an "alibi," and—some said—a political pull did the rest for him.

Boucicault could not be found, but three ruffians were discovered with incriminating evidence concealed in their clothes.

Two of them had a pair of nickel-plated handcuffs, one the mate to Nick's revolver found on the first man, and one had Chick's revolvers and his watch.

The articles were all identified, the prisoners were taken to headquarters in a patrol wagon, and Nick, Chick and Patsy started for home.

There was nothing more to be done that night, Nick

said, and they might as well go home and catch forty winks of sleep before morning.

In truth, Nick and Chick were both in need of a quiet time, for they were still weak from the rough treatment they had received and dizzy from the effects of the gas.

A few hours' rest put them in shape, and next morning at nine, Nick started Chick and Patsy off for forty-fourth Street, suitably disguised.

Chick was to post himself at the front of the Montgomery house, and Patsy at the rear.

When they had been gone a half hour, Nick left the house in his make-up of "Jones of Albany."

He hired a cab and was driven to the Montgomery house.

A man in a white suit was working in the street in front of the house, and this man was Chick.

Nick told the cabby not to wait, paid him and ascended the steps and pushed the electric bell.

A housemaid came to the door.

"I would like to see Mr. Montgomery," said Nick.
"He's not at home, sir."

"Then I would like to speak with Miss Louise Lansing."

"She is not well this morning."

"I think she will see me. I wish to talk with her about her brother."

A voice from the second floor came down the stairway behind the maid.

"Have the gentleman come in, Mary. Show him up to uncle's study—I will see him there."

Nick was admitted and ushered up the broad stairs into a large room, lined with books and comfortably furnished.

An open desk, strewed with papers, was at one end of the room.

A young lady of eighteen or nineteen, very pretty but very much depressed, as Nick could see, met him as he came in.

Her eyes were red, and it was evident that she had been weeping.

"Miss Lansing?" the detective asked.

"That is my name, sir."

"My name is Jones; I'm from Albany, and—"

"I heard you tell the servant that you wished to speak with me about my brother," broke in the girl, eagerly. "Do you know anything about him? He has been gone since Monday night, and the suspense of not knowing whether he is living or dead is more than

I can bear. He disappeared from Boston, as perhaps you know."

"I will tell you about your brother in a few moments, Miss Lansing. First, however, I would like to ask about your uncle, Mr. Montgomery."

"Do you know whether John is alive? Oh, tell me that before anything else!"

"Is your uncle in the house?" asked Nick.

"Did not the servant tell you he was gone?"

"When a servant tells a caller that her master is out, it does not always follow that he is."

"My uncle is not in the house, Mr. Jones."

Nick passed to the study door and closed it.

Then he came back and took a chair by the desk.

"Your brother, Miss Lansing, is alive and well."

Louise clasped her hands, and a sigh of intense relief escaped her lips.

"Oh, I am so happy!" she murmured. "You cannot tell, Mr. Jones, what a relief it is to me to know that. I will tell uncle just as soon as he comes."

"You must not tell your uncle, Miss Lansing," said Nick, firmly.

"Not tell Uncle Horace?" she cried. "Why, what can you mean?"

"Just what I say. In a little while your uncle will know everything, but just now he must know nothing. It is your brother's wish as well as mine."

"But I cannot see why you make such a request," said the girl, perplexedly.

"Jones is not my real name, Miss Lansing," said Nick.

He had been studying the girl and felt he could trust her.

"No?" she asked.

"I am Nicholas Carter."

"You don't tell me! John said he was going to secure your services to look into this mine matter."

"That is what he did, and that is why I am here now. It is also the reason why I ask you to keep from your uncle the knowledge that your brother is alive and well."

"Of course, Mr. Carter, if you desire it, I will say nothing."

"I do desire it. Call me Jones, Miss Lansing, just as though you did not know my real name. If you could continue to act as though depressed and anxious about your brother, whenever you meet your uncle, it would be well."

Her eyes opened very wide, but she did not ask Nick why he desired all this.

It was evident that she thought it was all in the line of his duty and that questioning would be out of place.

"I will do as you say, Mr. Carter—Mr. Jones."

Nick was about to speak on, but his eye caught a flash of something among the papers on the desk.

He picked up the object and found that it was a small, nickel-plated instrument used in manufacturing cigarettes.

"To whom does this belong?" he inquired.

"To Uncle Horace. Do you know what it is, Mr. Jones?"

Nick ignored the question.

"How long has your uncle had it?"

"I do not know. I only remember seeing it here during the last two or three days."

"You would have seen it if it had been here before?"

"I think so."

"Does your uncle smoke cigarettes?"

"What a curious question, Mr. Jones," smiled the girl. "No, he does not."

"Does your brother, John?"

"No."

Nick laid the nickel-plated instrument back on the desk.

"Was your uncle home last night, Miss Lansing?"

"Yes."

"All night?"

"He was at his club until midnight."

"Ah! And at what time did he leave this morning?"

"About eight o'clock."

Nick looked at his watch.

It was five minutes of ten.

"Did he say when he would return?"

"He said he would not return until late this afternoon. Two gentlemen were to call here this morning, he said, and I was to give them this letter."

She picked up a sealed and addressed envelope that lay on a book on the library table.

Nick apparently gave little attention to the letter.

"Has your uncle a profession?" he asked, casually, settling back in the comfortable chair.

"Not now," she answered.

"What did he do formerly?"

"He speculated."

"On the stock market?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long since he quit speculating?"

"Are you asking me all these questions because——"

"Just because I am curious," Nick smiled. "Detectives are always curious, you know."

"But has this anything to do with the Royal Ophir mine?"

"Indirectly."

"Well, it was only a month ago that uncle stopped operating on the stock market."

"Was he generally successful?"

"I do not know, Mr. Jones. I think he was."

"Your uncle is wealthy?"

"I do not think he is so very wealthy."

"Then he could not have been a very successful operator, do you think?"

"I never stopped to think of the matter in that way. Uncle has enough to keep him as long as he lives, I guess."

The maid rapped at the door, just then, and summoned Miss Lansing away.

"You will excuse me, Mr. Jones?" she asked, before leaving.

"Certainly," said Nick. "Gladly," he added to himself.

The instant he was left alone, Nick picked up the letter that lay on the library table.

"J. Edward Bingham, Esq.," ran the address.

Pulling out a leaf of the desk, Nick picked up a pearl paper cutter and ran the edge around under the flap.

Then he took out the folded sheet and read as follows:

"DEAR BINGHAM: Called away and cannot meet you and Cooper at ten this morning. Terhune found it impossible to come, but will meet you at another place to-night, and deal will then be consummated. Bring your certified checks to my house at eight this evening, and I will take you to the place where Terhune is to be waiting.
MONTGOMERY."

Picking up a blank sheet of paper, Nick took a pen and wrote another letter.

It was slightly different from Montgomery's.

He made no attempt to imitate Montgomery's handwriting, nor did he sign Montgomery's name.

Experience assured him that receiving the communication from Miss Lansing, and in Montgomery's house, would make the letter plausible enough for the purpose.

"DEAR BINGHAM: Called away and cannot meet you and Cooper at ten this morning. Deal is off for to-day. Return by first train to Boston and wait there until Terhune and I come."

Nick put this in the envelope, sealed it with mucilage found on the desk, and laid the letter on the book on the library table, just as it was before.

In looking for the mucilage he had to disturb the papers a little, and he found something else which he considered of the utmost importance.

This something else was a cigarette box containing five cigarettes which fitted the cigarette machine and also bore a perfect resemblance to the cigarette Nick had smoked, the day before, in the assay office.

Nick sank back in the chair, his face extremely thoughtful.

"Well, well," he muttered.

Just then Miss Lansing came hurriedly in.

"The two gentlemen whom uncle expected are downstairs at the door," she said, walking to the table and picking up the letter. "I will return presently, Mr. Jones."

"I am in no hurry, Miss Lansing."

When again left alone, Nick picked a cigarette from the box and put it in his pocket.

He was ready to leave when Miss Lansing returned.

"Must you go?" asked the girl.

"Yes, but I would like to leave some one here, if you have no objections."

"Who, Mr. Jones?"

"One of my assistants. If possible, I would be glad if his presence here could remain a secret between us—even if your uncle should come."

"It could be arranged, Mr. Jones."

"Then I will summon my assistant. Will you conduct me to a rear window on this floor?"

The girl was puzzled, but led Nick to a window in the rear, overlooking the backyard between Forty-fourth and Forty-fifth Streets.

In one of the yards, in plain view of the rear of the Montgomery house, a roughly dressed young man was working at a clothes-pole.

Nick waved his hand.

The man nodded and started to slide down.

"Now," said Nick, "if I can go down and admit him——"

"I will do that myself, Mr. Jones."

In a few moments Patsy was with his chief and had received his instructions.

Louise Lansing accompanied Nick to the door.

"If your uncle should return, Miss Lansing," said Nick, in a low tone, "please tell him nothing about my having been here."

"I will not. When will my brother come?"

"To-night; but that must also be kept a secret, especially from your uncle and the servants. Your brother will explain to you."

When Nick departed he left behind him a very much bewildered young lady, yet a very happy one, nevertheless.

"The net is drawing in," thought Nick, "and it is catching a different fish than I imagined it would when I took this case."

CHAPTER IX.

GETTING DOWN TO BED-ROCK.

"Meet me at the corner, Chick," said Nick, as he passed the man who was working on the street.

Nick waited, just around the corner on Sixth Avenue, and Chick came, stripped of his white overalls, blouse and hat and wearing his own garments.

He had traded with the regular street-cleaner, for the time being, and the street-cleaner was five dollars better off by the deal.

"Did you observe closely the two men who called at the house while I was there?" Nick asked.

"Yes. They drove up in a two-wheeler, and when they came out one of them was reading a letter."

"Did the letter excite them?"

"They seemed a trifle worked up."

"They'll be worked up a good deal more before they finally quiet down," laughed Nick. "You have got to pass for one of those men to-night, Chick, and Patsy for the other."

"If it's pretty dark I guess we can."

"Patsy will be busy all day, and you'll have to secure the disguise for him as well as for yourself."

"All right."

"Get both disguises and bring them to the house. First, however, you are to take this cigarette and go to Cruse & Cupell's. Find Mr. Cupell and confer with him privately. Tell him who you are and that you want him to smoke the cigarette and assay it, just as he did the other."

"I see."

"Have him make a rush job of it."

"Sure."

"Then find out if Gillman has come back to work this morning."

"Anything else?"

"That's all."

Chick boarded a Sixth Avenue car and started for Twenty-third Street.

Nick went to the address given him by John Lansing.

It was an obscure boarding-house over on the other side of Broadway.

At the door Nick asked for "Herman Trevor," which was the name Lansing had penciled on the card.

Mr. Trevor was sick in bed, the servant said.

"He'll see me," said Nick.

"Who shall I tell him wants to see him?"

"Don't tell him. Just say it's in regard to the Royal Ophir."

Nick was admitted to the "sick" room and found that Lansing was feigning illness in order to keep in his room without causing remark.

He gave the young man a brief outline of what he had accomplished and of what he hoped yet to accomplish.

Lansing was astounded when he saw the drift of the detective's logic.

He did not agree with Nick in his deductions, but promised faithfully to carry out his instructions.

Nick went away and proceeded to a second-hand clothing store to buy a suit of clothes that he desired for his own use.

It was difficult to find what he wanted, but at last he succeeded and made for home.

Chick was already there.

"Here's the assay," said Chick, handing over the certificate.

"Fifty thousand to the ton," murmured Nick, looking at the certificate. "The cigarettes all pan out the same. You got the disguises?"

"Yes."

"Put on yours and be ready to go with me at seven o'clock. We'll carry Patsy's get-up with us in a satchel."

"I'll be ready. Gillman hasn't shown up at the assay office to-day, Nick."

"I didn't think he had."

Chick started out.

"By thunder!" exclaimed Nick, so suddenly and so forcibly that Chick whirled around and looked toward him inquiringly.

"You remember that Helena, Montana, deal?"

"I'll never forget it," returned Chick, with a good deal of feeling.

The case had consisted in the unearthing of a steal in a gold mill and bringing all but one of the thieves to justice.

"One of that clique of robbers got away."

"Slipped out between two days."

"He was an amalgamator on the day shift."

"Yes."

"I only saw the fellow for a brief space in the bunk-house at the Grubstake mine."

"When you went there as a reporter."

Nick nodded.

"At that time the fellow wore a full-beard. Now he's clean-shaven."

"How do you know?"

"Because he and Terhune are one and the same."

"The deuce!"

"I'm glad that's off my mind—it has been bothering me a good deal."

Chick went away and Nick threw himself down to smoke.

At seven o'clock Chick came into the study.

He had a brown satchel in his hand and looked like a red-haired capitalist.

"Good!" said Nick. "You'll do for Cooper."

"Providing you don't throw a flash light on me," laughed Chick. "You're good, too, but I don't know who you stand for."

"Horace Montgomery."

Nick wore an iron-gray wig and mustache and chin whiskers, gold-bowed spectacles rested on the bridge of his nose, and a silk hat of slightly old-fashioned block covered his head.

A grayish frock coat, with trousers of same material, patent leathers, dark spatts and a gold-headed cane finished the disguise.

In each hip pocket he had one of his small but reliable revolvers, and in the breast of his coat were two pairs of handcuffs.

They rode in a cab to the Montgomery house, the cab was dismissed and they walked up the steps to the door.

As Nick was about to press the bell the door opened and Montgomery himself stepped out.

For an instant the two confronted each other in the semi-gloom.

"Merciful heavens!" gasped Montgomery, gazing

as one transfixated at the living and breathing counterpart of himself.

He recoiled, brushing a hand across his forehead.

His eyes wandered to Chick.

"Cooper," he cried, "what does this mean?"

"I'll tell you what it means, Montgomery," answered Nick, sternly. "Go up to your study. Cooper will go with you, and I will join you both in a few moments."

As one in a dream Montgomery turned and entered the house.

He walked up the stairs, Chick close behind him.

When they had passed from sight, Nick turned to Louise Lansing, who was standing in the parlor doorway with distended eyes.

"Is—is it really you, Mr. Carter?" she queried.

"Yes."

"I can hardly believe my eyes."

"Is everything all right?"

"It is."

"How long has your uncle been here?"

"Not more than an hour."

"Now, listen, Miss Lansing. I will give the signal by dropping a book."

"I understand."

Nick ran hurriedly upstairs, and, as he turned from the landing, Patsy stepped out of a room and caught his sleeve.

"Anything happened here since I left you, Patsy?" whispered Nick.

"Not a thing of any consequence."

"You understand what's to be done?"

"Yes."

"Miss Lansing knows the signal."

Nick passed into the study, closing the door after him.

Montgomery, a harrassed and apprehensive look on his face, sat in the chair before his desk.

He turned his startled eyes on Nick as the latter entered.

"What does this farce mean?" he demanded, making a great effort to regain his composure.

"It means that I shall pose as Horace Montgomery for a few hours."

"What sort of a crooked game are you attempting to play?"

"It is not crooked."

"Who in the fiend's name are you, anyway?"

"Nicholas Carter."

Montgomery had started to rise, but at the sound of that name he sank back with glassy eyes.

"You—you—" he faltered. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to have a little talk with you. Could you load a few cigarettes for me, Mr. Montgomery?"

Had a bomb exploded at Montgomery's feet he could not have been more startled than he was then.

He sprang forward in his chair and stared at the great detective as one fascinated.

"When you speculated with the money belonging to John and Louise Lansing why did you not tell them?"

Montgomery's white lips moved but gave no sound.

"After you losing that money, why have you tried to make your wards believe that you were going to invest it in the Royal Ophir mine?"

The guardian swallowed a lump in his throat, and his face was as white as a sheet.

"Did you want to make it appear that you had invested it in a salted mine, after an investigation that was seemingly sincere, and had lost it in that way?"

No answer came from the pallid wretch in the chair.

"What was to be your share of the money to be secured from Cooper and Bingham?"

Still no answer.

"Horace Montgomery, you are a thief!"

Nick was on his feet in front of the cowering man, pointing one finger at him.

Montgomery merely writhed in his seat, but did not say a word.

"But that is not the worst," went on the detective, mercilessly. "You know that your nephew, John Lansing, started for Boston on Monday night, by the Fall River boat."

Nick drew back to the library table and picked up a book that lay there.

"You told Terhune that John Lansing was going to Boston to talk with Cooper and Bingham in the attempt to dissuade them from making that investment in the Royal Ophir mine."

"Terhune took the same boat that Lansing boarded."

"At midnight, out in the Sound, Terhune and Lansing had a talk, angry words were passed, Terhune struck Lansing on the head in a moment of passion and flung him into the sea—"

"It's a lie!" cried Montgomery, hoarsely.

"It's the truth!"

"Are you man or devil?" whispered Montgomery. He made a sudden movement and jerked a revolver

from a drawer in his desk. "But, man or devil, stop this bullet if you can!"

Chick made a motion as though he would grab Montgomery's arm.

With a look Nick warned him not to interfere and threw the book to the floor.

Instantly the hall door opened.

"There," cried Nick, whirling and pointing to the form of John Lansing standing in the door, "there stands your dead sister's son, the boy you robbed, the boy whom you thought Terhune had murdered!"

The revolver trembled in Montgomery's hand.

He dropped it, sprang up and stood looking at his nephew as though confronted by a specter.

Suddenly he threw up his hand and fell backward into his seat.

"John!" he groaned; "John!"

Nick sprang to his side.

"Where were you to meet Terhune to-night?" cried Nick. "I knew that you were to meet him and to take Bingham and Cooper with you. Where was it? Tell me, quick!"

Montgomery looked into Nick's face with frenzied eyes.

It seemed hard for him to comprehend anything.

Nick repeated his question.

"Tell me, I tell you!" he finished. "You thought your nephew was killed, and you kept the matter a secret; and you tried to kill me and my assistant in Boucicault's, last night—"

"Before Heaven, Carter—" began Montgomery.

"Where were you to meet Terhune, to-night?" demanded Nick.

"The Obelisk, Central Park."

"What time?"

"Eight-thirty."

"Who were to be there?"

"Terhune, Starlick, Gillman."

"You were to exchange money for a deed?"

"Yes."

"Not at the Obelisk?"

"No. We were to go to a room."

Montgomery's desk-chair was a massive piece of furniture with high carved arms running from back to seat.

With a quick movement Nick slipped the man's wrists together, one hand under the arm.

The next moment he had snapped on the handcuffs, securing Montgomery to the chair.

Owing to the height of the chair-arms the position was not uncomfortable.

"Oh, Mr. Carter," cried the voice of Louise Lansing from the door, "is it necessary to do that?"

"For a little while only," answered Nick. "I have prevented the steal that your uncle, in connection with Terhune and his accomplices, tried so hard to accomplish.

"Terhune is wanted in Montana for another crime, but your uncle I shall leave in your hands."

Nick turned to John Lansing.

"Here is a key to those handcuffs," he said. "Do not release him until nine o'clock."

John Lansing was very pale and was trembling visibly.

It was evident that his nerves were greatly shaken at the disclosure he had heard.

"I will do as you say, Mr. Carter," said he.

"Chick," went on Nick, facing his assistant, "Patsy is in the hall. Take him that outfit and have him make ready. There's sharp work ahead."

In five minutes Patsy was ready, and the detectives departed.

They would have to be quick if they kept the appointment at the Obelisk.

CHAPTER X.

CAPTURED AT THE OBELISK.

At eight-thirty sharp a "four-wheeler" dashed up the east drive of Central Park and came to a halt opposite the Egyptian relic known as the Obelisk, otherwise "Cleopatra's Needle."

Three men got out of the carriage.

An electric light faintly illuminated that particular spot, and the forms looked dark and indistinct.

But their general outlines were plain enough.

Three more men sat on a park bench hard by the Obelisk.

One of them was tall and wore a slouch hat.

"Here they come," he said, in a low voice to those near him.

At the same moment Nick Carter had breathed to his two aides:

"Get the cuffs on them as soon as we get within arm's reach. I'll take Terhune. Chick, you'll attend to the man in the brown derby. Patsy, take the third."

The three men on the bench got up and spread out,

separating so that there were two or three yards between each of them.

The detectives also separated, each making for the man that had been picked out for him.

A mounted policeman, farther along the drive, was approaching at a trot.

He had seen the four-wheeler driving faster than the park regulations allowed, and had started after it at a gallop.

Now that the carriage had stopped haste was not necessary, and he came on at a more leisurely gait.

Nick and Terhune came close together at the railing about the base of the monument. Nick with his right hand thrust into the breast of the frock coat and holding the second pair of cuffs.

"On time, I see," said Terhune.

"Always on time," answered Nick, edging closer.

"Are those fellows all right?"

"Whisper," said Nick, bending forward.

Terhune brought his face close.

Snap!

Almost before he could realize what was up the cold steel was about his wrists.

"You're my prisoner, Terhune," said Nick, calmly. "Make a break and you'll stop a bullet."

"Nick Carter!" cried the amazed Westerner.

"The same."

"Curse you!"

He sprang at Nick furiously.

Nick grabbed him by the collar, but he wrenched away, fighting like a demon with his manacled hands.

"Here, none o' that!"

It was the officer.

He had dismounted to read the riot act to the driver of the carriage, the latter having jumped from the box to fix one of the harness tugs.

Seeing that a row, as he supposed, had started up the incline toward the monument, he ran in that direction.

"Stop!" shouted Nick to Terhune, who was a yard or more away. "Stop or I'll shoot you."

Nick had a revolver in his hand, but the officer was close enough to grab it.

"Don't you know better than to——"

"Nick Carter, officer!" exclaimed Nick. "I'm after that man—he's a thief."

"Je-ru-sa-lem!" gasped the astounded bluecoat.

By then, Terhune, making good use of his legs, had reached the officer's horse.

Without touching his manacled hands to the saddle he sprang to the animal's back, gave a yell, and dug in with his heels.

Away went the horse at a wild gallop.

Half a dozen jumps carried Nick down the hill. Another jump landed him on the seat of the carriage.

Grabbing up the lines and the whip, with one movement, he plied the lash and the startled horses leaped madly away.

The policeman was close behind Nick, more than anxious to help undo the evil results of his mistake.

He was athletic enough, and he grabbed at the carriage as it started, rested one foot on the turning hub, and gained the box.

"We'll get him," he said. "Let me use the whip and you do the driving."

The horses tore away at a mad gallop, the officer slapping them right and left.

Pedestrians scampered in every direction, but, owing to Nick's skillful handling of the lines, no one was injured.

Nick did not think he could overtake the fugitive, but he knew that something would happen to the fellow, and he wanted to be near enough to see that he did not escape, in case of accident or other misadventure.

Suddenly a mounted officer appeared in the roadway directly ahead of Terhune.

Taking in the situation, the officer turned his horse across the road and drew a gun.

"Halt!" he cried.

Terhune halted, but he did not surrender.

Owing to the nature of the ground on each side of the driveway he could not turn from the road, so he whirled the horse sharply and started full-tilt in the direction of the carriage.

Nick divined his object.

He counted on passing the carriage and making off in the other direction—a desperate expedient at best.

In order to keep those on the carriage-seat from shooting him, Terhune leaned down and shielded the upper part of his body behind the horse's neck.

"I'll have him now," muttered Nick, pulling the carriage team to a halt. "Officer, take the lines."

The officer took them, and Nick made ready for a spring.

On came the horse at a gallop, heading to pass within a few feet of the carriage, on Nick's side.

The detective watched his chances, and, when the right moment had arrived, hurled himself outward and downward, grabbing the horse's bits.

The weight on its head brought the animal to an abrupt stop—so abrupt that Terhune was thrown from the saddle into the road.

Before he could rise, Nick was on top of him, pinning him down.

Terhune, in spite of the handcuffs, had drawn a revolver from a breast pocket, and Nick jerked it out of his hand.

"Don't be a fool," said Nick. "You might have been killed!"

An oath was Terhune's only response.

Nick, groping about under the frock coat, found another revolver in his prisoner's hip pocket and a knife and sheath in the breast pocket.

Both weapons he abstracted and threw to the policeman who had jumped down, caught his horse, and was standing near, ready to lend a hand in case help was needed.

But the Little Giant did not require assistance.

"It's up to you, Carter," said Terhune. "You've got me and I cave."

"Get up, then."

Nick got off the fellow's prostrate form, thrusting a hand through his arm.

The policeman picked up Terhune's hat and put it on his head, and Nick marched his man over to where Chick and Patsy were holding Gillman and Starlick.

The capture was safely effected, but the great detective had had an exciting three minutes.

Patsy had had no trouble at all in getting the darbies on Gillman, and Chick had not had enough to speak of in making the capture of Starlick.

Starlick showed fight and tried to run around the Obelisk, an empty handcuff dangling from his right wrist.

Chick caught him in two leaps, threw him down, and put on the other bracelet.

The manacles had a quieting effect, and Starlick undertook the rôle of an "innocent bystander."

"What in the blazes does this mean?" he cried, angrily.

"If you don't know you'll find out quick enough," replied Chick.

"It's an outrage, an infernal outrage. Officer," he turned to the man who accompanied Nick and Terhune, "I demand that you have these handcuffs taken off my wrists."

"Keep still!" exclaimed the officer, sharply. "Nick Carter knows well enough what he's about."

Starlick toned down, the very name of Nick Carter having a quieting effect.

An hour later the men were in the police station, and Nick had sent a telegram to the Chief of Police, Helena, Montana, telling of the capture of Terhune.

Not one of the prisoners was brought to book on account of the clever swindle which would have been perpetrated but for the skill and vigilance of Nick Carter and his assistants.

Starlick was found to be an old offender and badly wanted for a safe-cracking job in Chicago.

He went that far West on the same train that took Terhune back to Montana.

Both men were tried and sent over the road.

Gillman had all the elements that go to the making of a daring and successful crook.

But there was little to be brought against him and he was allowed to go his way.

As for Montgomery, he shot himself the day following, and was found leaning over his desk, dead.

The revolver was still clutched in his hand, and a letter lay in front of him addressed to his two wards.

A portion of the letter ran as follows:

"I used your money in my speculative schemes without your knowledge. I believe I had a right to do this, for under the terms of your mother's will I had an absolutely free hand to make use of the money as I saw fit.

"For a time I made money on Wall Street. But my fate was the common fate of all stock gamblers. My own earnings went, and then I used your funds and they went, too.

"I could not bear to have it known that I had lost

your inheritance on the stock market, and so connived at this other operation. I was to help Terhune. Os tensibly the Royal Ophir was to cost a million, of which I was to put up \$500,000 and the two Boston men the remaining \$500,000. Really, only the money of the Boston men was to go into the deal.

"It was my business to interest them and to help on the 'salting' operation to the extent of preparing the loaded cigarettes. For this I expected to receive \$100,000—which sum I intended turning over to you.

"But I have failed in that, and now the utmost I can do is to die so that you may have the \$150,000 insurance which I have taken out on my life. That and this home is to be yours. It is all that is left of your inheritance.

"So the very last act of my career is a swindle, a swindle against the insurance company. But they cannot get out of paying the death loss."

The Boston men, when they learned how Nick Carter had intercepted Montgomery's letter and inclosed another in the envelope sending them to Boston, and also read the account of the capture of Terhune and his pals by Nick and his assistants, were more than grateful.

They would have tendered a substantial reward, but the detective would not have it.

The case had afforded several novel features worth studying, and, besides, Nick had brought to justice an offender who had slipped away from him in Montana, thus making a clean record in the matter of the Grub-stake mill conspiracy.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 317, will contain "Nick Carter's Auto Chase; or, Trailing the Red Spider." The theft of \$75,000 from a country bank, in Latimer, Vermont, was no ordinary robbery, as Nick saw immediately on taking hold of the case. The surprising developments that followed his arrival on the scene, including the mysterious shot in the telephone booth, which nearly cost Nick his life, and the strange part he played as the chauffeur of the "Red Spider," form a fascinating detective story of the deepest interest. Do not miss it!

STORIES OF MYSTERY.

Send in your stories of mystery, boys.
The contest promises to be a great one.
Don't you think the subject interesting?
Now, let's see what you can do.
For full particulars, see page 31.

Jack Warden's Second Case; or, The Strange Death of a Millionaire.

(By Frank J. Parker, Buffalo, N. Y.)

One morning, a few weeks after the affair at Watson's jewelry store, as Jack Warden was eating his breakfast, a messenger boy bounded into the room and handed Jack a letter. This is what it contained:

July 15, 189—.

JACK WARDEN:—

Be in my office at police headquarters at 9 A. M., sharp. Important.

CHIEF OF POLICE.

"Hum!" mused Jack, "I'll bet my hat that's a case. Here's a quarter for you, sonny. No answer necessary. Let's see what we can make of the letter. The chief was in a hurry, as the manner in which the envelope was sealed and the hurried writing tells me that. The word 'sharp' and the word 'important' tell me that something is up. Well, I still have forty-five minutes, so I'll finish breakfast first."

In the office of the chief might have been seen that individual and a detective, whom, for various reasons, we will call Jones. He was one of the men detailed on the Watson case. The two were in earnest conversation, waiting for Jack Warden to appear. Just at this time the clock began striking nine. At the sixth stroke the door opened and in walked the young man in question.

"Glad to see you, Jack," said the chief, cordially, shaking the handsome fellow by the hand. "On time, I see."

"Always try to be," was Jack's reply. "But what's up?"

"Oh," said the chief, "Mr. Bennett, the millionaire was murdered last night. I thought you might be interested."

"Murdered!" exclaimed Jack.

"That's what the family reported, but here's a carriage, so let's go up to his residence and look over the affair."

Half an hour later the three alighted at the millionaire's residence on Delaware Avenue, and were ushered into the reception room. Here they were met by a stern-looking young man of about thirty years of age.

"Oh, so you are a member of the family," said Jack, by way of introduction.

"How did you know that?" asked the stranger, in surprised tones.

"Very simple," was the reply. "Your watch chain bears the letter B, and the same letter appears on the ring on your finger. I noticed also the name 'Arthur' on a piece of paper protruding from your vest pocket, and since Mr. Bennett's name is Arthur, and added to the fact of

your presence here on this particular morning, I was led to believe that you are Arthur Bennett. Am I right?"

The chief looked admiringly at Jack while the stranger answered: "Yes, you are right. I am Mr. Bennett's nephew. Will you look at the scene of the tragedy? We have left everything untouched, so that you might get all the clews."

"By all means," said the chief. "Let us see into it at once."

Accordingly all four ascended to the library where the dead body of Mr. Bennett had been discovered. The library table, where the millionaire had been accustomed to sit, was piled full of papers. In the chair, with his body leaning over on the table, was the dead money king. In the back of his head, almost midway between both ears, was an ugly wound, where the bullet had done its work, for he had been shot. There was little blood, showing that death had been instantaneous. No weapon of any kind was to be seen. About ten feet behind the chair was a door, opening into his nephew's room.

"Now, boys, let's get to work," said the chief. "In the first place I'd like to ask some questions. Who discovered the murder?"

"I did," said Arthur.

"When?"

"About eight-fifteen this morning."

"What time did Mr. Bennett usually retire?"

"About 11 P. M."

"Pardon me," said Jack, "but you were out last night. Where did you go?"

"How did you know?" exclaimed the astonished nephew.

"Humph," was the reply. "It rained last night. Look at the mud on your shoes. Now where were you?"

"I called on a lady friend of mine at No. 473 — Avenue, and did not get home until one o'clock."

"How were things then?"

"My uncle's light was still burning, so, thinking he was busy, since he was up so late, I did not disturb him, but retired at once."

Some further questioning was done by the chief, and when he was through he noticed that Jack Warden had disappeared. But the young detective soon returned and his face bore a triumphant smile. He motioned the chief aside and showed him a box of .38-caliber cartridges which he had found in the nephew's overcoat. He explained that he had thought there might be a clew of some sort in Arthur's clothes, since he was the only person who had come and gone from the house during the time in which the tragedy had occurred. The result we have shown.

"Would you kindly show us your room?" said the chief, turning to Arthur.

The young man reluctantly consented, and, opening the door, all four crowded into the room.

"This, I suppose," said Jack, facing a large dresser, "is where you usually stand when retiring." Suddenly Jack opened the top drawer of the dresser. What object was it that met their view? A five-chamber revolver, .38-caliber, and one chamber was discharged!

"That explains why there was no weapon to be seen," said Detective Jones.

Arthur was trembling from head to foot, for it was his revolver. At this point the chief took out the box of cartridges and counted its contents. There were forty-five cartridges, instead of fifty!

"Young man," said the official, sternly, "this is a serious business—for you. It is my belief that there is sufficient evidence to warrant an arrest. You will have to come with us. Will you go quietly or shall I put these on?" producing the darts.

"Oh God, no!" was the reply. "I see you suspect me. God knows I am innocent. I'll go quietly."

So the young man accompanied the two officers, Jack staying behind to await the arrival of the coroner. Arthur was taken into the chief's private office at police headquarters, where he told his story, the substance of which is as follows:

He, Arthur Bennett, went out the afternoon of the tragedy and bought the box of cartridges because his supply was exhausted. After loading the revolver, he placed it in his uncle's library table drawer, where it was accustomed to stay. In the evening he went to see his friend, and returned at one o'clock. Seeing the light in the library still burning, he thought that the old gentleman might be busy, and did not disturb him, but retired immediately. When he arose the light was still burning. Surprised, he opened the door and discovered things just as we have described them, with the exception that the revolver was on the floor behind Mr. Bennett's chair. Thinking he might be suspected, he hid the firearm in his dresser and then notified the police.

The chief took down this story, and then Arthur was led to a cell to await examination.

"Now, Jones, get to work," said the chief. "I suppose Jack Warden is already on a trail. You might trace Arthur's movements yesterday afternoon and last night."

Jones assented, and left the office.

* * * * *

An hour later. While the chief was still thinking over this new case, for the evidence was by no means complete, the door opened and in walked our handsome young detective, Jack Warden.

"Chief," said he, "Arthur Bennett is absolutely innocent of this crime."

Had a thunderbolt exploded in the room it could not have surprised the chief more.

"What!" exclaimed he, jumping from his chair. "What are you driving at?"

"Simply this," was the reply. "I assert that Arthur is innocent. If you will listen I think you will be inclined to believe me. I suppose you know that I stayed behind to await the coroner. In the meantime I interviewed the servants. I learned from one who was awake all night

with neuralgia, that just after the clock struck one she heard Arthur enter the front door. Furthermore, she said that about ten minutes after eleven she heard something like the shot of a revolver, but, thinking it might have been the slamming of a door, she paid no attention to it. Another servant said that she heard the clock strike eleven and just after she began to sleep. She claimed that she could not have been asleep more than five minutes when she was startled by a noise similar to the one which the other servant heard. Thinking it was an idle fancy, she went to sleep again. This proves that Arthur was not here during the time of the tragedy.

"The question was, who was the murderer? I questioned Arthur before I came up here, and the servants also, but they claimed that all windows and doors were securely locked. Shortly after my interview with the servants, the coroner and a physician arrived. After examining the dead man they both expressed their opinion that he had been dead at least ten hours. I looked over the library again, searching for clews. I also examined the revolver. And, chief, if you will again visit the scene of the tragedy with me I will explain to you how Mr. Bennett died."

The chief consented, and, half an hour later, they again entered the fatal room. Proceeding to a spot directly behind the chair, Jack showed the chief a little dent in the waxed floor, such as would be produced by the falling of a metallic object on it. Jack then showed him the revolver, on the pearl handle of which was a newly made crack.

"You see," said the young detective to his superior, "that the two things correspond. I believe that Mr. Bennett had this revolver on the table, since he was afraid of burglars. It was probably mingled up with papers and things, and accidentally shoved to the edge, when it fell to the floor, causing the dent in the latter and the crack in the handle. Striking the floor, it exploded, the bullet entering his head and killing him instantly. Let me illustrate."

Removing the cartridges, Jack placed the firearm on the edge of the table and gave it a shove. Strange to relate, it fell in almost the exact spot and another crack appeared in the pearl. At the same time the hammer snapped shut.

"Thus you see," said Jack Warden, "how Mr. Bennett came to his death."

Just at this moment Detective Jones entered the room. He said that he had been to headquarters, and, finding where the chief had gone, he had come to the Bennett residence to report. He had traced Arthur's movements, had been to see the young man's lady friend, and produced enough evidence that Arthur had nothing to do with the tragedy. The chief gave him a few words of praise, and then dismissed him.

After he had departed, the chief turned to Jack and said: "My boy, you are a jewel. If not for you, we would probably have spent weeks trying to discover the manner of Mr. Bennett's death. Arthur would probably have remained in prison for months. As I said at the time of the Watson affair, you are a brick, a perfect brick and no mistake."

Thus Jack Warden probably saved Arthur Bennett from going to prison, and made known the true cause

of the death of old Mr. Bennett, by accidentally discovering the little dent in the floor.

Arthur was released, and the chief humbly apologized. The funeral of Mr. Bennett occurred two days later. But the next day another startling crime came to the ears of the chief of police, and Jack Warden had his hands full with this new mystery.

The Chicago Bank Robbery.

(By Ned Holmes, Lexington, Neb.)

One night in the midst of a great rainstorm, three men, named Tim Clutterbuck, Terry Gerritty and Brockly Talbot, broke into the Second National Bank, on Madison Street. They operated on the safe and with a big charge of dynamite blew the hinges off. As they were thus engaged the night watchman came in upon them. There was a desperate struggle and the watchman fought all three of them almost to a standstill, when Clutterbuck got in his rear, and, bringing the heavy butt of his revolver down with all his force, crushed in his skull. He died almost instantly, and the robbers left the place with a cool hundred thousand in bank notes. As luck would have it, one of them left a clew in his flight—a note addressed to Talbot.

Five years afterward some burglars broke into the bank in a little town in Illinois. They were surprised by the citizens, and one of the robbers was mortally wounded. He thought he might as well go out of the world with a clear conscience. He sent for the superintendent of police, and before he died he implicated Clutterbuck and Gerritty in the murder of the watchman, as well as the robbery of the Chicago bank. A detective named Leonard took up the trail. He traced the two robbers to San Francisco, where he found that they and three others were planning to rob the Mercantile Bank. He concealed himself in the bank on the night of the attempted robbery, and when the robbers began to blow open the safe he dashed in upon them, and a terrible fight followed. He killed all but Clutterbuck. He handcuffed him and took him back to Chicago, where he was tried and sentenced to the electric chair, while Leonard received the reward of ten thousand dollars offered for his arrest and conviction.

A Woman's Scream Caused It All.

(By B. J. Clements, Hopkinsville, Ky.)

On the night of January 12th, 189—, I was standing in front of a drug store in Henderson. I heard a woman's scream. I went in the direction it came from, but couldn't find the one who screamed. I then concluded to go and get some sleep. So I went to the hotel and went to bed. After breakfast the next morning, I went to the place where the scream came from, and this is what I saw: A beautiful woman, of, perhaps, twenty-five years of age, in a pool of blood, with a dagger through her heart. I then went and called a cop, and we raised her up and pulled the dagger out. The dagger had the initials R. S. on the handle. We also found a letter from R. Sneddon to Miss Lucille Hamilton. It was only a common letter of no importance. We then had quite a crowd by this time. The coroner had taken

charge of the body. He afterward rendered a verdict of, "Murdered by an unknown party." The chief of police telegraphed to several towns around. No one had heard of a man by the name of Sneddon, or a woman by the name of Hamilton, except Mt. Vernon, Ill. They knew Sneddon. This is the description they gave: Thirty years of age, five feet nine inches tall; weighed one hundred and seventy-five pounds; occupation, carpenter. Had black hair, clean shaved, but had one piece out of ear in shape of a V, made by a knife in a saloon brawl. Was a frequenter of saloons.

We looked in all the saloons in town, but couldn't find a man by that description. As I had to leave the next day to go to Evansville, I went to bed directly after supper. The next morning I went to Evansville. As I went out of the depot there I saw a man of the same description as the man at Henderson. I didn't know whether he was the man or not. At last I determined to follow him and see where he went. He went into a saloon, and I went in, too, just to see what he would do. He went up to the bar and took a drink, but left a package and a carpenter's kit, which he carried, with the barkeeper. He said he would be back in about half an hour or so. As he passed me I picked a letter out of his pocket. I then went out also. I looked at the letter. It was addressed to R. Sneddon, Mt. Vernon, Ill. It was signed L. H. The contents were of no importance but one line. It was: "I don't love you, so there is no use in coming here." That was all I wanted, so I hurried to police headquarters, and had a warrant sworn out for R. Sneddon. Two cops went with me back to the saloon. As luck would have it, he was coming out of the saloon with the package and kit. I told the cops there was their man. They walked up to him and said: "We would like to see you around the corner." He wavered a moment, and then came ahead. After he was around the corner he was handcuffed to the cops. He turned around and said: "What do you want?" I said: "They want you at Henderson." He turned pale, but laughed and said: "I am ready." The cops took him to the sweat-box. After a good deal of trouble and time, he confessed that he was the man. That the woman was his sweetheart. He murdered her because she wouldn't marry him. The chief of police at Henderson came up and took him back to his death, as it was, when he was tried. He wouldn't tell anything about the woman only what I have told. This was the end of my being in Henderson, so I went home and I am going to stay there.

A Fortunate Miser.

(By Henry Wacker, Los Angeles, Cal.)

Jud Nichols lived on the outskirts of a fair-sized city in California. He was about forty years of age, although he looked twenty years older, probably brought about by the worry over his small fortune. This fortune was gained, by hoarding all his money, instead of providing himself with the luxuries of life.

His home, which was a dilapidated affair, consisting of two rooms—a sleeping apartment and a kitchen—was situated on a piece of land, about two acres in size. On this small tract of ground he raised vegetables, which he sold, thus increasing the amount of his small fortune.

In order to protect himself from robbers, the miser al-

ways kept a Winchester rifle within reach, when he slept. He also secreted his money, so, if he was ever visited by thieves, his wealth could not be easily found.

One dark night, near the hour of twelve, Jud Nichols was visited by a robber, whose sole desire was to secure the hidden wealth. The thief gained an easy entrance to the structure, through the aid of a skeleton key.

After firmly assuring himself that the old niggard was not awake, he silently searched for the secreted money. He did not go about his work like one who is new at the trade, but explored the rooms like an expert.

After a thorough and extended search the midnight prowler was rewarded for his work, for, lying on the very bottom of the old man's wood-box, was the coveted sack of money. The thief quickly placed the bag of coin in another sack, which he had, and with noiseless footsteps started for the door. The robber had arrived at the threshold, when a loud report echoed through the room, and the robber fell headlong down the steps with a bullet wound in the fleshy part of his leg. Jud Nichols, the miser, who had fired the shot, then made a dash for the door, intent upon capturing the thief.

But his attempt was a failure, for he had hardly arrived at the door, when the robber jumped up, started for a nearby thicket with a limping run, and he was soon lost in the darkness.

The miser was so wrought up over the loss of his money, that he immediately attired himself and walked the entire distance of four miles to the detective bureau, and there reported the successful robbery.

The following morning the detectives took up the trail, which was marked by blood. After following it about half a mile, they came upon the midnight prowler, who was lying upon the ground and emitting groans, from the terrible pain he was suffering.

After relieving the pain as best as they could, the detectives boarded a nearby car with their prisoner, and soon arrived at the receiving hospital, where the bullet was extracted from the leg of the prisoner. After the operation was performed the thief was placed in an iron cell in the jail.

About a month later his trial took place, and he was found guilty of a criminal offense, and was given a sentence of ten years at the State penitentiary.

Carl Green, the Detective.

(By Charles Foy, Springfield, Mass.)

Carl Green crept along the rafters like a cat. The night was remarkably dark. Hark! What is that? It is the clock striking the hour of midnight.

The time has come.

Carl Green carefully took a small vial from his pocket. He uncocked it with a precise and careful movement, and extracted something pink and something bitter.

First he swallowed the blue and then the pink tablet. Ah, he felt better now. Carl Green proceeded along the rafters again. Despite his utmost caution he made a slight noise.

"Hush!" sounded a hoarse voice below. A number of fiery eyes turned up to the ceiling.

Carl Green quickly assumed the disguise of a rafter and counted the eyes.

Sixteen.

"Hush!" sounded again from below. The fiery eyes were again turned upward.

"Boys," said a voice, "I am going to take a shot up there just for luck."

It was the voice of Jesse James, the bandit king of America.

Not for one instant did Carl Green's presence of mind desert him.

"Katy did," he chirruped.

"Katy didn't," he also chirruped, in flat contradiction. Jesse James laughed ashamedly.

"It's only a couple of Katy-dids a-scrappin'," he confessed, sheepishly.

Sliding hastily down a water-spout, Carl Green disappeared in the night.

"Ha, ha!" cried Jesse James, the bandit. Anon he changed the respective positions of the aspirants. "Ah, ah!" he then said.

Carl Green, turning quickly around, gazed with an eagle eye up the barrels of two seven-shooters.

Jesse James scowled fiercely. Carl Green stood stanch. The night was very dark.

"They are dum-dum bullets," explained Jesse, kindly.

"It makes no difference," coldly remarked Carl Green.

"Why not?" snarled Jesse. "Why not? I'd like to know."

"Because your guns will flash in the pan," calmly replied the famous detective, with a majestic attitude of derision.

"Devil!" hissed the bandit, lowering his murderous weapons.

With a haughty stride Carl Green turned on his heel.

"I'll try it, anyhow," muttered Jesse James to himself, hoarsely. He aimed both revolvers at the figure of the retiring detective.

"Dum-dum," spoke the guns. "Dam-dam," spoke Carl Green, acutely identifying himself as the injured party.

The ambulance ambled along some two hours or so later, and the surgeon promptly diagnosed the case as alcoholism.

It was not until they proceeded to lift Carl Green's recumbent form into the waiting wagon that the doctor discovered, from the tremendous weight of the body, that the man was stuffed with lead at every pore.

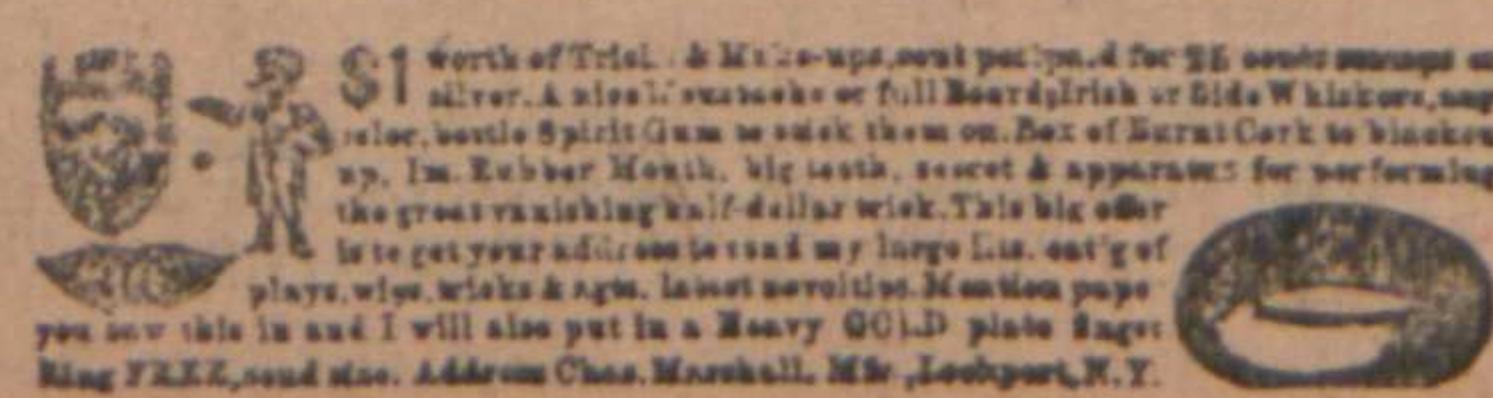
After a decent interval the ambulance driver turned into the hospital courtyard. The doctors gathered around and examined the wounded man.

"Ha, ha!" they cried in glee to the ambulance surgeon.

"He's a dead one. The drinks are on you. Walking into the hospital is very thirsty work."

The surgeon, with a gasp of disgust, swallowed his cigarette. "Foiled again!" he exclaimed, bitterly, "and by whom?" The dead man slowly and impressively raised his head.

"By Carl Green, the detective," he replied, in sepulchral tones.



STORIES OF MYSTERY



RE you interested in stories of that nature? Do you know any stories with a mystery in them? If you do, write it out and send it to us. In this new Mystery Story Contest we are giving away

FIFTY PRIZES—175 SPLENDID BOOKS

Just look at the list of books for boys given below. They are the very finest stories that money can buy and written by celebrated authors with whom you are all familiar. Do you want to win two or more of these books? **YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO WIN TEN.** Write out any story you know into which the element of mystery enters, and send it in.

FIVE FIRST PRIZES!

The five boys who send in the five best stories will each re-

ceive TEN BOOKS from this list.

The ten boys who send in the next best stories

will each receive any FOUR BOOKS they may select in this list.

FIFTEEN THIRD PRIZES!

The fifteen boys who send us the

next best stories will each receive any THREE BOOKS they may select in this list.

TWENTY OTHER PRIZES!

The twenty boys who send in the

next best stories will each receive any TWO BOOKS they may select in this list.

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS

This contest will close March 1st. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name. To become a contestant for these prizes, you must cut out the Prize

Contest Coupon printed herewith, fill it out properly and mail it to NICK CARTER WEEKLY, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your story. No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON

Nick Carter Mystery Story Contest

Name.....
Street and No.....
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Title of Story.....

This contest will be an interesting one, boys. The "Nick Carter Weekly" has a bigger circulation than any magazine of detective work ever issued. The stories published in this contest will be read by nearly every boy in America.

| | |
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| 60— <i>The Mountain Cave</i> | By George H. Coomer |
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| 63— <i>In the Sunk Lands</i> | By Walter F. Burns |
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| 92— <i>Specter Gold</i> | By Headon Hill |
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| 94— <i>Oscar; or, The Boy Who Had His Own Way</i> | By Walter Aimwell |
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| 101— <i>The Lone Ranch</i> | By Captain Mayne Reid |
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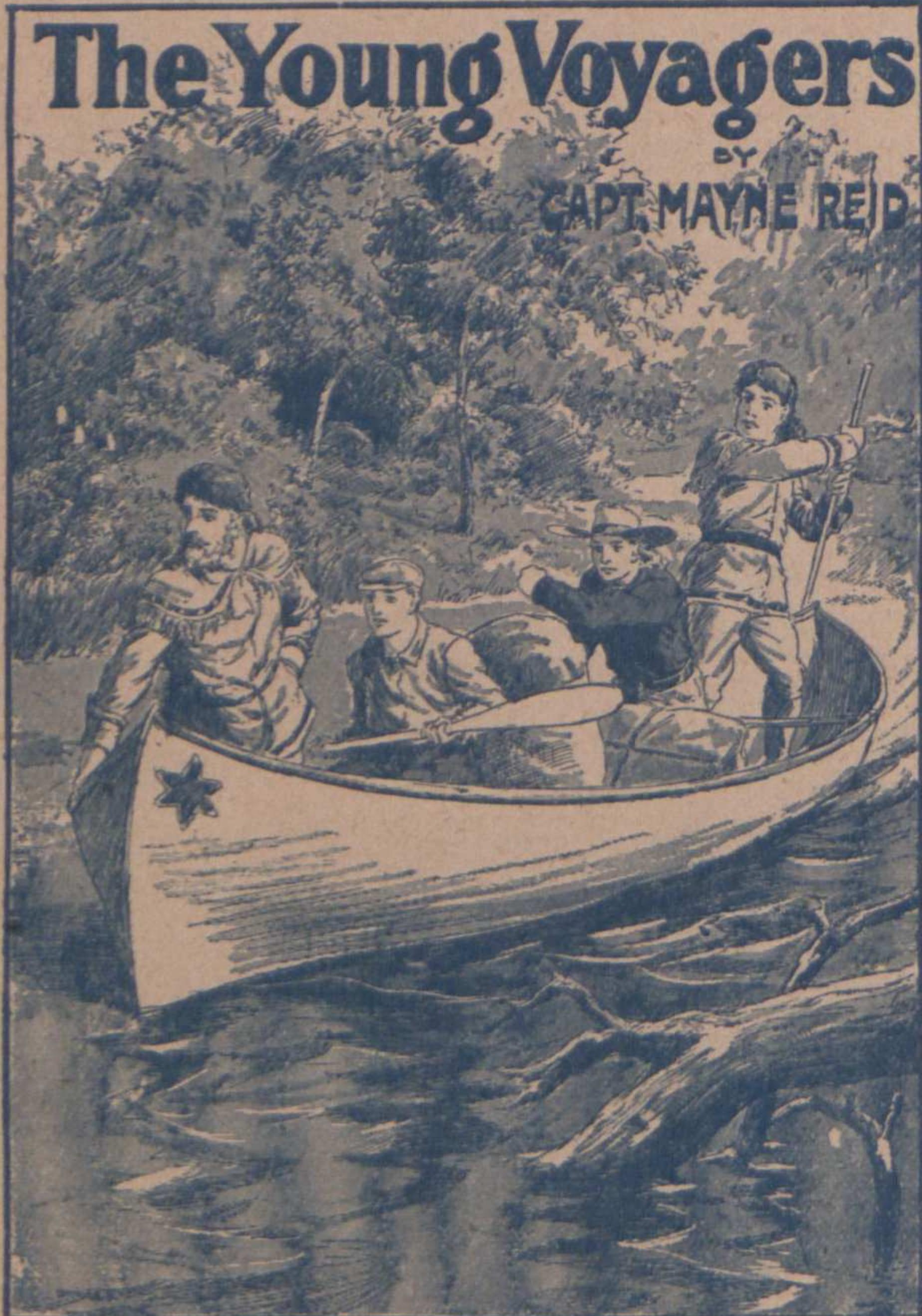
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